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DON ORSINO,¹

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CHAPTER IV.

THE rage of speculation was at its height in Rome. Thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of persons were embarked in enterprises which soon afterwards ended in total ruin to themselves and in very serious injury to many of the strongest financial bodies in the country. Yet it is a fact worth recording that the general principle upon which affairs were conducted was an honest one. The land was a fact, the buildings erected were facts, and there was actually a certain amount of capital, of genuine ready money, in use. The whole matter can be explained in a few words.

The population of Rome had increased considerably since the Italian occupation, and house-room was needed for the new comers. Secondly, the partial execution of the scheme for beautifying the city had destroyed great numbers of dwellings in the most thickly populated parts, and more house-room was needed to compensate the loss of habitations, while extensive lots of land were suddenly set free and offered for sale upon easy conditions in all parts of the town.

Those who availed themselves of these opportunities before the general rush began, realised immense profits, especially when they had some capital of their own to begin with. But capital was not indispensable. A man could buy his lot on credit; the banks

were ready to advance him money on notes of hand, in small amounts at high interest, wherewith to build his house or houses. When the building was finished the bank took a first mortgage upon the property, the owner let the house, paid the interest on the mortgage out of the rent, and pocketed the difference as clear gain. In the majority of cases it was the bank itself which sold the lot of land to the speculator. It is clear therefore that the only money which actually changed hands was that advanced in small sums by the bank itself.

As the speculation increased, the banks could not of course afford to lock up all the small notes of hand they received from various quarters. This paper became a circulating medium as far as Vienna, Paris, and even London. The crash came when Vienna, Paris and London lost faith in the paper, owing, in the first instance, to one or two small failures, and returned it upon Rome; the banks, unable to obtain cash for it at any price, and being short of ready money, could then no longer discount the speculator's further notes of hand; so that the speculator found himself with half-built houses upon his hands which he could neither let, nor finish, nor sell, and owing money upon bills which he had expected to meet by giving the bank a mortgage on the now valueless property.

That is what took place in the

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majority of cases, and it is not necessary to go into further details, though of course chance played all the usual variations upon the theme of ruin.

What distinguishes the period of speculation in Rome from most other manifestations of the kind in Europe is the prominent part played in it by the old land-holding families, a number of which were ruined in wild schemes which no sensible man of business would have touched. This was more or less the result of recent changes in the laws regulating the power of persons making a will.

Previous to 1870 the law of primogeniture was as much respected in Rome as in England, and was carried out with considerably greater strictness. The heir got everything, the other children got practically nothing but the smallest pittance. The palace, the gallery of pictures and statues, the lands, the villages, and the castles, descended in unbroken succession from eldest son to eldest son, indivisible in principle and undivided in fact.

The new law requires that one-half of the total property shall be equally distributed by the testator among all his children. He may leave the other half to any one he pleases, and as a matter of practice he of course leaves it to his eldest son.

Another law, however, forbids the alienation of all collections of works of art either wholly or in part, if they have existed as such for a certain length of time, and if the public has been admitted daily, or on any fixed days, to visit them. It is not in the power of the Borghese, or the Colonna, for instance, to sell a picture or a statue out of their galleries, nor to raise money upon such an object by mortgage or otherwise. Yet these works of art figure at a very high valuation in the total property of which the testator must divide one-half among his children, though in point of fact they yield no income whatever. But it is of no use to divide them, since none of the heirs could be at liberty to take them away

nor realise their value in any manner. The consequence is, that the principal heir, after the division has taken place, finds himself the nominal master of certain enormously valuable possessions, which in reality yield him nothing or next to nothing. He also foresees that in the next generation the same state of things will exist in a far higher degree, and that the position of the head of the family will go from bad to worse until a crisis of some kind takes place.

Such a case has recently occurred. A certain Roman prince is bankrupt. The sale of his gallery would certainly relieve the pressure, and would possibly free him from debt altogether. But neither he nor his creditors can lay a finger upon the pictures, nor raise a centime upon them. This man, therefore, is permanently reduced to penury, and his creditors are large losers, while he is still *de jure* and *de facto* the owner of property probably sufficient to cover all his obligations. Fortunately, he chances to be childless, a fact consoling, perhaps, to the philanthropist, but not especially so to the sufferer himself.

It is clear that the temptation to increase "distributable" property, if one may coin such an expression, is very great, and accounts for the way in which many Roman gentlemen have rushed headlong into speculation, though possessing none of the qualities necessary for success, and only one of the requisites, namely, a certain amount of ready money, or free and convertible property. A few have been fortunate, while the majority of those who have tried the experiment have been heavy losers. It cannot be said that any one of them all has shown natural talent for finance.

Let the reader forgive these dry explanations if he can. The facts explained have a direct bearing upon the story I am telling, but shall not, as mere facts, be referred to again.

I have already said that Ugo Del Ferice had returned to Rome soon after the change, had established him-

self with his wife, Donna Tullia, and was, at the time I am speaking about, deeply engaged in the speculations of the day. He had once been tolerably popular in society, having been looked upon as a harmless creature, useful in his way and very obliging. But the circumstances which had attended his flight some years earlier had become known, and most of his old acquaintances turned him the cold shoulder. He had expected this and was neither disappointed nor humiliated. He had made new friends and acquaintances during his exile, and it was to his interest to stand by them. Like many of those who have played petty and dishonourable parts in the revolutionary times, he had succeeded in building up a reputation for patriotism upon a very slight foundation, and had found persons willing to believe him a sufferer who had escaped martyrdom for the cause, and had deserved the crown of election to a constituency as a just reward of his devotion. The Romans cared very little what became of him. The old Blacks confounded Victor Emmanuel with Garibaldi, Cavour with Persiano, and Silvio Pellico with Del Ferice in one sweeping condemnation, desiring nothing so much as never to hear the hated names mentioned in their houses. The Grey party, being also Roman, disapproved of Ugo on general principles and particularly because he had been a spy; but the Whites, not being Romans at all, and entertaining an especial detestation for every distinctly Roman opinion, received him at his own estimation, as society receives most people who live in good houses, give good dinners, and observe the proprieties in the matter of visiting-cards. Those who knew anything definite of the man's antecedents were mostly persons who had little histories of their own, and they told no tales out of school. The great personages who had once employed him would have been magnanimous enough to acknowledge him in any case, but were agreeably disappointed when they discovered that he was not among

the common herd of pension-hunters, and claimed no substantial reward save their politeness and a line in the visiting-lists of their wives. And as he grew in wealth and importance they found that he could be useful still, as bank-directors and members of Parliament can be, in a thousand ways. So it came to pass that the Count and Countess Del Ferice became prominent persons in the Roman world.

Ugo was a man of undoubted talent. By his own individual efforts, though with small scruple as to the means he employed, he had raised himself from obscurity to a very enviable position. He had only once in his life been carried away by the weakness of a personal enmity, and he had been made to pay heavily for his caprice. If Donna Tullia had abandoned him when he was driven out of Rome by the influence of the Saracinesca, he might have disappeared altogether from the scene. But she was an odd compound of rashness and foresight, of belief and unbelief, and she had at that time felt herself bound by an oath she dared not break, besides being attached to him by a hatred of Giovanni Saracinesca almost as great as his own. She had followed him and had married him without hesitation; but she had kept the undivided possession of her fortune while allowing him a liberal use of her income. In return, she claimed a certain liberty of action when she chose to avail herself of it. She would not be bound in the choice of her acquaintances nor criticised in the measure of like or dislike she bestowed upon them. She was by no means wholly bad, and if she had a harmless fancy now and then, she required her husband to treat her as above suspicion. On the whole the arrangement worked very well. Del Ferice, on his part, was unswervingly faithful to her in word and deed, for he exhibited in a high degree that unfaltering constancy which is bred of a permanent, unalienable, financial interest. Bad men are often clever, but if their cleverness is of a superior order they rarely do

anything bad. It is true that when they yield to the pressure of necessity their wickedness surpasses that of other men in the same degree as their intelligence. Not only honesty, but all virtue collectively, is the best possible policy, provided that the politician can handle such a tremendous engine of evil as goodness is in the hands of a thoroughly bad man.

Those who desired pecuniary accommodation from the bank in which Del Ferice had an interest, had no better friend than he. His power with the directors seemed to be as boundless as his desire to assist the borrower. But he was helpless to prevent the foreclosure of a mortgage, and had been moved almost to tears in the expression of his sympathy with the debtor and of his horror at the hard-heartedness shown by his partners. To prove his disinterested spirit it only need be said that on many occasions he had actually come forward as a private individual and had taken over the mortgage himself, distinctly stating that he could not hold it for more than a year, but expressing a hope that the debtor might in that time retrieve himself. If this really happened, he earned the man's eternal gratitude; if not, he foreclosed indeed, but the loser never forgot that by Del Ferice's kindness he had been offered a last chance at a desperate moment. It could not be said to be Del Ferice's fault that the second case was the more frequent one, nor that the result to himself was profit in either event.

In his dealings with his constituency he showed a noble desire for the public welfare, for he was never known to refuse anything in reason to the electors who applied to him. It is true that in the case of certain applications, he consumed so much time in preliminary inquiries and subsequent formalities that the applicants sometimes died and sometimes emigrated to the Argentine Republic before the matter could be settled; but they bore with them to South America—or to the grave—the belief that the

Onorevole Del Ferice was on their side, and the instances of his prompt, decisive and successful action were many. He represented a small town in the Neapolitan Province, and the benefits and advantages he had obtained for it were numberless. The provincial high road had been made to pass through it; all express trains stopped at its station, though the passengers who made use of the inestimable privilege did not average twenty in the month; it possessed a Piazza Vittorio Emmanuela, a Corso Garibaldi, a Via Cavour, a public garden of at least a quarter of an acre, planted with no less than twenty-five acacias and adorned by a fountain representing a desperate-looking character in the act of firing a finely executed revolver at an imaginary oppressor. Pigs were not allowed within the limits of the town, and the uniforms of the municipal brass band were perfectly new. Could civilisation do more? The bank of which Del Ferice was a director bought the *octroi* duties of the town at the periodical auction, and farmed them skilfully, together with those of many other towns in the same province.

So Del Ferice was a very successful man, and it need scarcely be said that he was now not only independent of his wife's help but very much richer than she had ever been. They lived in a highly decorated, detached modern house in the new part of the city. The gilded gate before the little plot of garden bore their intertwined initials surmounted by a modest count's coronet. Donna Tullia would have preferred a coat-of-arms, or even a crest, but Ugo was sensitive to ridicule, and he was aware that a count's coronet in Rome means nothing at all, whereas a coat-of-arms means vastly more than in most cities.

Within, the dwelling was somewhat unpleasantly gorgeous. Donna Tullia had always loved red, both for itself and because it made her own complexion seem less florid by contrast, and accordingly red satin predominated in the drawing-rooms, red velvet in the

dining-room, red damask in the hall, and red carpets on the stairs. Some fine specimens of gilding were also to be seen, and Del Ferice had been one of the first to use electric light. Everything was new, expensive and polished to its extreme capacity for reflection. The servants wore vivid liveries, and on formal occasions the butler appeared in short-clothes and black silk stockings. Donna Tullia's equipage was visible at a great distance, but Del Ferice's own coachman and groom wore dark green with black epaulettes.

On the morning which Orsino and Madame d'Aragona had spent in Gouache's studio the Countess Del Ferice entered her husband's study in order to consult him upon a rather delicate matter. He was alone, but busy as usual. His attention was divided between an important bank operation and a petition for his help in obtaining a decoration for the mayor of the town he represented. The claim to this distinction seemed to rest chiefly on the petitioner's unasked evidence in regard to his own moral rectitude, yet Del Ferice was really exercising all his ingenuity to discover some suitable reason for asking the favour. He laid the papers down with a sigh as Donna Tullia came in.

"Good morning, my angel," he said suavely, as he pointed to a chair at his side—the one usually occupied at this hour by seekers for financial support. "Have you rested well?"

He never failed to ask the question.

"Not badly, not badly, thank Heaven!" answered Donna Tullia. "I have a dreadful cold, of course, and a headache—my head is really splitting."

"Rest—rest is what you need, my dear—"

"Oh, it is nothing. This Durakoff is a great man. If he had not made me go to Carlsbad—I really do not know. But I have something to say to you. I want your help, Ugo. Please listen to me."

Ugo's fat white face already expressed anxious attention. To accentuate the expression of his readiness to listen, he now put all his papers into a drawer and turned towards his wife.

"I must go to the Jubilee," said Donna Tullia, coming to the point.

"Of course you must go—"

"And I must have my seat among the Roman ladies."

"Of course you must," repeated Del Ferice with a little less alacrity.

"Ah! You see,—it is not so easy. You know it is not. Yet I have as good a right to my seat as any one—better perhaps."

"Hardly that," observed Ugo with a smile. "When you married me, my angel, you relinquished your claims to a seat at the Vatican functions."

"I did nothing of the kind. I never said so, I am sure."

"Perhaps if you could make that clear to the major-duomo—"

"Absurd, Ugo; you know it is. Besides, I will not beg. You must get me the seat. You can do anything with your influence."

"You could easily get into one of the diplomatic tribunes," observed Ugo.

"I will not go there. I mean to assert myself. I am a Roman lady, and I will have my seat; and you must get it for me."

"I will do my best. But I do not quite see where I am to begin. It will need time and consideration and much tact."

"It seems to me very simple. Go to one of the clerical deputies and say that you want the ticket for your wife—"

"And then?"

"Give him to understand that you will vote for his next measure. Nothing could be simpler, I am sure."

Del Ferice smiled blandly at his wife's ideas of parliamentary diplomacy.

"There are no clerical deputies in the parliament of the nation. If there were the thing might be possible, and

it would be very interesting to all the clericals to read an account of the transaction in the *Ossevatore Romano*. In any case, I am not sure that it will be much to our advantage that the wife of the Onorevole Del Ferice should be seen seated in the midst of the Black ladies. It will produce an unfavourable impression."

"If you are going to talk of impressions——" Donna Tullia shrugged her massive shoulders.

"No, my dear. You mistake me. I am not going to talk of them, because, as I at once told you, it is quite right that you should go to this affair. If you go, you must go in the proper way. No doubt there will be people who will have invitations but will not use them. We can perhaps procure you the use of such a ticket."

"I do not care what name is on the paper, provided I can sit in the right place."

"Very well," answered Del Ferice. "I will do my best."

"I expect it of you, Ugo. It is not often that I ask anything of you, is it? It is the least you can do. The idea of getting a card that is not to be used is good; of course they will all get them, and some of them are sure to be ill."

Donna Tullia went away satisfied that what she wanted would be forthcoming at the right moment. What she had said was true. She rarely asked anything of her husband. But when she did, she gave him to understand that she would have it at any price. It was her way of asserting herself from time to time. On the present occasion she had no especial interest at stake and any other woman might have been satisfied with a seat in the diplomatic tribune, which could probably have been obtained without great difficulty. But she had heard that the seats there were to be very high and she did not really wish to be placed in too prominent a position. The light might be unfavourable, and she knew that she was subject to growing very red in places where it was hot.

She had once been a handsome woman and a very vain one, but even her vanity could not survive the daily torture of the looking-glass. To sit for four or five hours in a high light, facing fifty thousand people, was more than she could bear with equanimity.

Del Ferice, being left to himself, returned to the question of the mayor's decoration, which was of vastly greater importance to him than his wife's position at the approaching function. If he failed to get the man what he wanted, the fellow would doubtless apply to some one of the opposite party, would receive the coveted honour, and would take the whole voting population of the town with him at the next general election, to the total discomfiture of Del Ferice. It was necessary to find some valid reason for proposing him for the distinction. Ugo could not decide what to do just then, but he ultimately hit upon a successful plan. He advised his correspondent to write a pamphlet upon the rapid improvement of agricultural interests in his district under the existing Ministry, and he even went so far as to enclose with his letter some notes on the subject. These notes proved to be so voluminous and complete that when the mayor had copied them he could not find a pretext for adding a single word or correction. They were printed upon excellent paper, with ornamental margins, under the title of *Onward, Parthenope!* Of course every one knows that Parthenope means Naples, the Neapolitans and the Neapolitan province, a siren of that name having come to final grief somewhere between the Chiatamone and Posilippo. The mayor got his decoration, and Del Ferice was re-elected; but no one has inquired into the truth of the statements made in the pamphlet upon agriculture.

It is clear that a man who was capable of taking so much trouble for so small a matter would not disappoint his wife when she had set her heart upon such a trifle as a ticket for the Jubilee. Within three days he had

the promise of what he wanted. A certain lonely lady of high position lay very ill just then, and it need scarcely be explained that her confidential servant fell upon the invitation as soon as it arrived and sold it for a round sum to the first applicant, who happened to be Count Del Ferice's valet. So the matter was arranged, privately and without scandal.

All Rome was alive with expectation. The date fixed was the first of January, and as the day approached the curious foreigner mustered in his thousands and tens of thousands and took the city by storm. The hotels were thronged. The billiard tables were let as furnished rooms, people slept in the lifts, on the landings, in the porters' lodges. The thrifty Romans retreated to roofs and cellars and let their small dwellings. People reaching the city on the last night slept in the cabs they had hired to take them to Saint Peter's before dawn. Even the supplies of food ran low and the hungry fed on what they could get, while the delicate of taste very often did not feed at all. There was of course the usual scare about a revolutionary demonstration, to which the natives paid very little attention, but which delighted the foreigners.

Not more than half of those who hoped to witness the ceremony saw anything of it, though the basilica will hold some eighty thousand people at a pinch, and the crowd on that occasion was far greater than at the opening of the Ecumenical Council in 1869.

Madame d'Aragona had also determined to be present, and she expressed her desire to Gouache. She had spoken the strict truth when she had said that she knew no one in Rome, and so far as general accuracy is concerned it was equally true that she had not fixed the length of her stay. She had not come with any settled purpose beyond a vague idea of having her portrait painted by the French artist, and unless she took the trouble to make acquaintances, there was nothing attractive enough about the capital to keep her. She allowed herself to be driven about

the town, on pretence of seeing churches and galleries, but in reality she saw very little of either. She was preoccupied with her own thoughts and subject to fits of abstraction. Most things seemed to her intensely dull, and the unhappy guide who had been selected to accompany her on her excursions wasted his learning upon her on the first morning, and subsequently exhausted the magnificent catalogue of impossibilities which he had concocted for the especial benefit of the uncultivated foreigner, without eliciting so much as a look of interest or an expression of surprise. He was a young and fascinating guide, wearing a white satin tie, and on the third day he recited some verses of Stecchetti and was about to risk a declaration of worship in ornate prose, when he was suddenly rather badly scared by the lady's yellow eyes, and ran on nervously with a string of deceased popes and their dates.

"Get me a card for the Jubilee," she said abruptly.

"An entrance is very easily procured," answered the guide. "In fact I have one in my pocket, as it happens. I bought it for twenty francs this morning, thinking that one of my foreigners would perhaps take it of me. I do not even gain a franc—my word of honour."

Madame d'Aragona glanced at the slip of paper.

"Not that," she answered. "Do you imagine that I will stand? I want a seat in one of the tribunes."

The guide lost himself in apologies, but explained that he could not get what she desired.

"What are you for?" she inquired.

She was an indolent woman, but when by any chance she wanted anything, Donna Tullia herself was not more restless. She drove at once to Gouache's studio. He was alone and she told him what she needed.

"The Jubilee, madame? Is it possible that you have been forgotten?"

"Since they have never heard of me! I have not the slightest claim to a place."

"It is you who say that. But your place is already secured. Fear nothing. You will be with the Roman ladies."

"I do not understand——"

"It is simple. I was thinking of it yesterday. Young Saracinesca comes in and begins to talk about you. 'There is Madame d'Aragona who has no seat,' he says. 'One must arrange that.' So it is arranged."

"By Don Orsino?"

"You would not accept? No! A young man, and you have only met once. But tell me what you think of him. Do you like him?"

"One does not like people so easily as that," said Madame d'Aragona. "How have you arranged about the seat?"

"It is very simple. There are to be two days, you know. My wife has her cards for both, of course. She will only go once. If you will accept the one for the first day she will be very happy."

"You are angelic, my dear friend! Then I go as your wife?" She laughed.

"Precisely. You will be Faustina Gouache instead of Madame d'Aragona."

"How delightful! By the by, do not call me Madame d'Aragona. It is not my name. I might as well call you Monsieur de Paris, because you are a Parisian."

"I do not put Anastase Gouache de Paris on my cards," answered Gouache with a laugh. "What may I call you? Donna Maria?"

"My name is Maria Consuelo d'Aranjuez."

"An ancient Spanish name," said Gouache.

"My husband was an Italian."

"Ah! Of Spanish descent, originally of Aragona. Of course."

"Exactly. Since I am here, shall I sit for you? You might almost finish to-day."

"Not so soon as that. It is Don Orsino's hour, but as he has not come, and since you are so kind—by all means."

"Ah, is he unpunctual?"

"He is probably running after those abominable dogs in pursuit of the feeble fox—what they call the noble sport."

Gouache's face expressed considerable disgust.

"Poor fellow!" said Maria Consuelo. "He has nothing else to do."

"He will get used to it. They all do. Besides, it is really the natural condition of man. Total idleness is his element. If Providence meant man to work, it should have given him two heads, one for his profession and one for himself. A man needs one entire and undivided intelligence for the study of his own individuality."

"What an idea!"

"Do not men of great genius notoriously forget themselves, forget to eat and drink and dress themselves like Christians? That is because they have not two heads. Providence expects a man to do two things at once—sing an air from an opera and invent the steam-engine at the same moment. Nature rebels. Then Providence and nature do not agree. What becomes of religion? It is all a mystery. Believe me, madame, art is easier than nature, and painting is simpler than theology."

Maria Consuelo listened to Gouache's extraordinary remarks with a smile.

"You are either paradoxical, or irreligious, or both," she said.

"Irreligious? I, who carried a rifle at Mentana? No, madame, I am a good Catholic."

"What does that mean?"

"I believe in God, and I love my wife. I leave it to the Church to define my other articles of belief. I have only one head, as you see."

Gouache smiled, but there was a note of sincerity in the odd statement which did not escape his hearer.

"You are not of the type which belongs to the end of the century," she said.

"That type was not invented when I was forming myself."

"Perhaps you belong rather to

the coming age—the age of simplification.”

“As distinguished from the age of mystification—religious, political, scientific and artistic,” suggested Gouache. “The people of that day will guess the Sphinx’s riddle.”

“Mine? You were comparing me to a sphinx the other day.”

“Yours, perhaps, madame. Who knows? Are you the typical woman of the ending century?”

“Why not?” asked Maria Consuelo with a sleepy look.

CHAPTER V.

THERE is something grand in any great assembly of animals belonging to the same race. The very idea of an immense number of living creatures conveys an impression not suggested by anything else. A compact herd of fifty or sixty thousand lions would be an appalling vision, beside which a like multitude of human beings would sink into insignificance. A drove of wild cattle is, I think, a finer sight than a regiment of cavalry in motion, for the cavalry is composite, half man and half horse, whereas the cattle have the advantage of unity. But we can never see so many animals of any species driven together into one limited space as to be equal to a vast throng of men and women, and we conclude naturally enough that a crowd consisting solely of our own kind is the most imposing one conceivable.

It was scarcely light on the morning of New Year’s Day when the Princess Sant’ Ilario found herself seated in one of the low tribunes on the north side of the high altar in Saint Peter’s. Her husband and her eldest son had accompanied her, and having placed her in a position from which they judged she could easily escape at the end of the ceremony, they remained standing in the narrow winding passage between improvised barriers which led from the tribune to the door of the sacristy, and which had been so arranged as to prevent

confusion. Here they waited, greeting their acquaintances when they could recognise them in the dim twilight of the church, and watching the ever-increasing crowd that surged slowly backward and forward outside the barrier. The old prince was entitled by an hereditary office to a place in the great procession of the day, and was not now with them.

Orsino felt as though the whole world were assembled about him within the huge cathedral, as though its heart were beating audibly and its muffled breathing rising and falling in his hearing. The unceasing sound that went up from the compact mass of living beings was soft in quality, but enormous in volume and sustained in tone, a great whispering which might have been heard a mile away. One hears in mammoth musical festivals the extraordinary effect of four or five thousand voices singing very softly; it is not to be compared to the unceasing whisper of fifty thousand men.

The young fellow was conscious of a strange, irregular thrill of enthusiasm which ran through him from time to time and startled his imagination into life. It was only the instinct of a strong vitality unconsciously longing to be the central point of the vitalities around it. But he could not understand that. It seemed to him like a great opportunity brought within reach but slipping by untaken, not to return again. He felt a strange, almost uncontrollable longing to spring upon one of the tribunes, to raise his voice, to speak to the great multitude, to fire all those men to break out and carry everything before them. He laughed audibly at himself. Sant’ Ilario looked at his son with some curiosity.

“What amuses you?” he asked.

“A dream,” answered Orsino, still smiling. “Who knows,” he exclaimed after a pause, “what would happen, if at the right moment the right man could stir such a crowd as this?”

“Strange things,” replied Sant’

Ilario gravely. "A crowd is a terrible weapon."

"Then my dream was not so foolish after all. One might make history today."

Sant' Ilario made a gesture expressive of indifference.

"What is history?" he asked. "A comedy in which the actors have no written parts, but improvise their speeches and actions as best they can. That is the reason why history is so dull and so full of mistakes."

"And of surprises," suggested Orsino.

"The surprises in history are always disagreeable, my boy," answered Sant' Ilario.

Orsino felt the coldness in the answer, and felt even more his father's readiness to damp any expression of enthusiasm. Of late he had encountered this chilling indifference at almost every turn, whenever he gave vent to his admiration for any sort of activity.

It was not that Giovanni Saracinesca had any intention of repressing his son's energetic instincts, and he assuredly had no idea of the effect his words often produced. He sometimes wondered at the sudden silence which came over the young man after such conversations, but he did not understand it and on the whole paid little attention to it. He remembered that he himself had been different, and had been wont to argue hotly and not unfrequently to quarrel with his father about trifles. He himself had been headstrong, passionate, often intractable in his early youth, and his father had been no better at sixty and was little improved in that respect even at his present great age. But Orsino did not argue. He suggested, and if any one disagreed with him he became silent. He seemed to possess energy in action, and a number of rather fantastic aspirations; but in conversation he was easily silenced and in outward manner he would have seemed too yielding if he had not often seemed too cold.

Giovanni did not see that Orsino was most like his mother in character, while the contact with a new generation had given him something unfamiliar to the old, an affectation at first, but one which habit was amalgamating with the real nature beneath.

No doubt it was wise and right to discourage ideas which would tend in any way to revolution. Giovanni had seen revolutions and had been the loser by them. It was not wise, and was certainly not necessary to throw cold water on the young fellow's harmless aspirations. But Giovanni had lived for many years in his own way, rich, respected, and supremely happy, and he believed that his way was good enough for Orsino. He had, in his youth, tried most things for himself, and had found them failures so far as happiness was concerned. Orsino might make the series of experiments in his turn if he pleased, but there was no adequate reason for such an expenditure of energy. The sooner the boy loved some girl who would make him a good wife, and the sooner he married her, the sooner he would find that calm, satisfactory existence which had not finally come to Giovanni until after thirty years of age.

As for the question of fortune, it was true that there were four sons, but there was Giovanni's mother's fortune, there was Corona's fortune, and there was the great Saracinesca estate behind both. They were all so extremely rich that the deluge must be very distant.

Orsino understood none of these things. He only realised that his father had the faculty, and apparently the intention, of freezing any originality he chanced to show, and he inwardly resented the coldness, quietly, if foolishly, resolving to astonish those who misunderstood him by seizing the first opportunity of doing something out of the common way. For some time he stood in silence watching the people who came by and glancing from time to time at the dense crowd outside the barrier. He was suddenly

aware that his father was observing intently a lady who advanced along the open way.

"There is Tullia Del Ferice!" exclaimed Sant' Ilario in surprise.

"I do not know her, except by sight," observed Orsino indifferently.

The countess was very imposing in her black veil and draperies. Her red face seemed to lose its colour in the dim church, and she affected a slow and stately manner more becoming to her weight than was her natural restless vivacity. She had got what she desired and she swept proudly along to take her old place among the ladies of Rome. No one knew whose card she had delivered up at the entrance to the sacristy, and she enjoyed the triumph of showing that the wife of the revolutionary, the banker, the member of parliament, had not lost caste after all.

She looked Giovanni full in the face with her disagreeable blue eyes as she came up, apparently not meaning to recognise him. Then, just as she passed him, she deigned to make a very slight inclination of the head, just enough to compel Sant' Ilario to return the salutation. It was very well done. Orsino did not know all the details of the past events, but he knew that his father had once wounded Del Ferice in a duel and he looked at Del Ferice's wife with some curiosity. He had seldom had an opportunity of being so near to her.

"It was certainly not about her that they fought," he reflected. "It must have been about some other woman, if there was a woman in the question at all."

A moment later he was aware that a pair of tawny eyes were fixed on him. Maria Consuelo was following Donna Tullia at a distance of a dozen yards. Orsino came forward and his new acquaintance held out her hand. They had not met since they had first seen each other.

"It was so kind of you," she said.

"What, madame?"

"To suggest this to Gouache. I

should have had no ticket—where shall I sit?"

Orsino did not understand, for though he had mentioned the subject, Gouache had not told him what he meant to do. But there was no time to be lost in conversation. Orsino led her to the nearest opening in the tribune and pointed to a seat.

"I called," he said quickly. "You did not receive——"

"Come again; I will be at home," she answered in a low voice, as she passed him.

She sat down in a vacant place beside Donna Tullia, and Orsino noticed that his mother was just behind them both. Corona had been watching him unconsciously, as she often did, and was somewhat surprised to see him conducting a lady whom she did not know. A glance told her that the lady was a foreigner; as such, if she were present at all, she should have been in the diplomatic tribune. There was nothing to think of, and Corona tried to solve the small social problem that presented itself. Orsino strolled back to his father's side.

"Who is she?" inquired Sant' Ilario with some curiosity.

"The lady who wanted the tiger's skin — Aranjuez — I told you of her."

"The portrait you gave me was not flattering. She is handsome, if not beautiful."

"Did I say she was not?" asked Orsino with a visible irritation most unlike him.

"I thought so. You said she had yellow eyes, red hair, and a squint." Sant' Ilario laughed.

"Perhaps I did. But the effect seems to be harmonious."

"Decidedly so. You might have introduced me."

To this Orsino said nothing, but relapsed into a moody silence. He would have liked nothing better than to bring about the acquaintance, but he had only met Maria Consuelo once, though that interview had been a long one, and he remembered her rather

short answer to his offer of service in the way of making acquaintances.

Maria Consuelo on her part was quite unconscious that she was sitting in front of the Princess Sant' Ilario, but she had seen the lady by her side bow to Orsino's companion in passing, and she guessed from a certain resemblance that the dark, middle-aged man might be young Saracinesca's father. Donna Tullia had seen Corona well enough, but as they had not spoken for nearly twenty years she decided not to risk a nod where she could not command an acknowledgment of it. So she pretended to be quite unconscious of her old enemy's presence.

Donna Tullia, however, had noticed as she turned her head in sitting down that Orsino was piloting a strange lady to the tribune, and when the latter sat down beside her, she determined to make her acquaintance, no matter upon what pretext. The time was approaching at which the procession was to make its appearance, and Donna Tullia looked about for something upon which to open the conversation, glancing from time to time at her neighbour. It was easy to see that the place and the surroundings were equally unfamiliar to the newcomer, who looked with evident interest at the twisted columns of the high altar, at the vast mosaics in the dome, at the red damask hangings of the nave, at the Swiss guards, the chamberlains in court dress, and at all the mediæval-looking, motley figures that moved about within the space kept open for the coming function.

"It is a wonderful sight," said Donna Tullia in French, very softly, and almost as though speaking to herself.

"Wonderful indeed," answered Maria Consuelo, "especially to a stranger."

"Madame is a stranger, then," observed Donna Tullia with an agreeable smile.

She looked into her neighbour's face and for the first time realised that she was a striking person.

"Quite," replied the latter, briefly, and as though not wishing to press the conversation.

"I fancied so," said Donna Tullia, "though on seeing you in these seats, among us Romans——"

"I received a card through the kindness of a friend."

There was a short pause, during which Donna Tullia concluded that the friend must have been Orsino. But the next remark threw her off the scent.

"It was his wife's ticket, I believe," said Maria Consuelo. "She could not come. I am here on false pretences." She smiled carelessly.

Donna Tullia lost herself in speculation, but failed to solve the problem.

"You have chosen a most favourable moment for your first visit to Rome," she remarked at last.

"Yes, I am always fortunate. I believe I have seen everything worth seeing ever since I was a little girl."

"She is somebody," thought Donna Tullia. "Probably the wife of a diplomatist, though. Those people see everything, and talk of nothing but what they have seen."

"This is historic," she said aloud. "You will have a chance of contemplating the Romans in their glory. Colonna and Orsino marching side by side, and old Saracinesca in all his magnificence. He is eighty-two years old."

"Saracinesca!" repeated Maria Consuelo, turning her tawny eyes upon her neighbour.

"Yes. The father of Sant' Ilario—grandfather of that young fellow who showed you to your seat."

"Don Orsino? Yes, I know him slightly."

Corona sitting immediately behind them heard her son's name. As the two ladies turned towards each other in conversation she heard distinctly what they said. Donna Tullia was of course aware of this.

"Do you?" she asked. "His father is a most estimable man—just

a little too estimable, if you understand! As for the boy——"

Donna Tullia moved her broad shoulders expressively. It was a habit of which even the irreproachable Del Ferice could not cure her. Corona's face darkened.

"You can hardly call him a boy," observed Maria Consuelo with a smile.

"Ah, well—I might have been his mother," Donna Tullia answered with a contempt for the affectation of youth which she rarely showed. But Corona began to understand that the conversation was meant for her ears, and grew angry by degrees. Donna Tullia had indeed been near to marrying Giovanni, and in that sense, too, she might have been Orsino's mother.

"I fancied you spoke rather disparagingly," said Maria Consuelo, with a certain degree of interest.

"I? No, indeed. On the contrary, Don Orsino is a very fine fellow—but thrown away, positively thrown away in his present surroundings. Of what use is all this English education—but you are a stranger, madame, you cannot understand our Roman point of view."

"If you could explain it to me, I might, perhaps," suggested the other.

"Ah, yes—if I could explain it! But I am far too ignorant myself—no, ignorant is not the word—too prejudiced, perhaps, to make you see it quite as it is. Perhaps I am a little too liberal, and the Saracinesca are certainly far too conservative. They mistake education for progress. Poor Don Orsino, I am sorry for him."

Donna Tullia found no other escape from the difficulty into which she had thrown herself.

"I did not know that he was to be pitied," said Maria Consuelo.

"Oh, not he in particular, perhaps," answered the stout countess, growing more and more vague. "They are all to be pitied, you know. What is to become of young men brought up in that way? The club, the turf, the card-table—to drink, to gamble, to bet, it is not an existence!"

"Do you mean that Don Orsino leads that sort of life?" inquired Maria Consuelo indifferently.

Again Donna Tullia's heavy shoulders moved contemptuously.

"What else is there for him to do?"

"And his father? Did he not do likewise in his youth?"

"His father? Ah, he was different—before he married—full of life, activity, originality!"

"And since his marriage?"

"He has become estimable, most estimable." The smile with which Donna Tullia accompanied the statement was intended to be fine, but was only spiteful. Maria Consuelo, who saw everything with her sleepy glance, noticed the fact.

Corona was disgusted, and leaned back in her seat, as far as possible, in order not to hear more. She could not help wondering who the strange lady might be to whom Donna Tullia was so freely expressing her opinions concerning the Saracinesca, and she determined to ask Orsino after the ceremony. But she wished to hear as little more as she could.

"When a married man becomes what you call estimable," said Donna Tullia's companion, "he either adores his wife or hates her."

"What a charming idea!" laughed the countess. It was tolerably evident that the remark was beyond her.

"She is stupid," thought Maria Consuelo. "I fancied so from the first. I will ask Don Orsino about her. He will say something amusing. It will be a subject of conversation at all events, in place of that endless tiger I invented the other day. I wonder whether this woman expects me to tell her who I am? That will amount to an acquaintance. She is certainly somebody, or she would not be here. On the other hand, she seems to dislike the only man I know besides Gouache. That may lead to complications. Let us talk of Gouache first, and be guided by circumstances."

"Do you know Monsieur Gouache?" she inquired abruptly.

"The painter? Yes—I have known him a long time. Is he perhaps painting your portrait?"

"Exactly. It is really for that purpose that I am in Rome. What a charming man!"

"Do you think so? Perhaps he is. He painted me some time ago. I was not very well satisfied. But he has talent."

Donna Tullia had never forgiven the artist for not putting enough soul into the picture he had painted of her when she was a very young widow.

"He has a great reputation," said Maria Consuelo, "and I think he will succeed very well with me. Besides, I am grateful to him. He and his painting have been a pleasant episode in my short stay here."

"Really? I should hardly have thought you could find it worth your while to come all the way to Rome to be painted by Gouache," observed Donna Tullia. "But of course, as I say, he has talent."

"This woman is rich," she said to herself. "The wives of diplomatists do not allow themselves such caprices, as a rule. I wonder who she is?"

"Great talent," assented Maria Consuelo. "And great charm, I think."

"Ah, well—of course—I dare say. We Romans cannot help thinking that for an artist he is a little too much occupied in being a gentleman—and for a gentleman he is quite too much an artist."

The remark was not original with Donna Tullia, but had been reported to her as Spicca's, and Spicca had really said something similar about somebody else.

"I had not got that impression," said Maria Consuelo, quietly.

"She hates him too," she thought. "She seems to hate everybody. That either means that she knows everybody, or is not received in society. But of course you know him better

than I do," she added aloud, after a little pause.

At that moment a strain of music broke out above the great, soft, muffled whispering that filled the basilica. Some thirty chosen voices of the choir of St. Peter's had begun the hymn *Tu es Petrus*, as the procession began to defile from the south aisle into the nave, close by the great door, to traverse the whole distance thence to the high altar. The Pope's own choir, consisting solely of the singers of the Sistine Chapel, waited silently behind the lattice under the statue of Saint Veronica.

The song rang out louder and louder, simple and grand. Those who have heard Italian singers at their best know that thirty young Roman throats can emit a volume of sound equal to that which a hundred men of any other nation could produce. The stillness around them increased, too, as the procession lengthened. The great, dark crowd stood shoulder to shoulder, breathless with expectation, each man and woman feeling for a few short moments that thrill of mysterious anxiety and impatience which Orsino had felt. No one who was there can ever forget what followed. More than forty cardinals filed out in front from the Chapel of the Pietà. Then the hereditary assistants of the Holy See, the heads of the Colonna and the Orsini houses, entered the nave, side by side for the first time, I believe, in history. Immediately after them, high above all the procession and the crowd, appeared the great chair of state, the huge white feathered fans moving slowly on each side, and upon the throne, the central figure of that vast display, sat the Pope, Leo the Thirteenth.

Then, without warning and without hesitation, a shout went up such as had never been heard before in that dim cathedral, nor will, perhaps, be heard again. "*Viva il Papa-Rè!* Long life to the Pope-King!" At the same instant, as though at a preconcerted signal—utterly impossible

in such a throng—in the twinkling of an eye, the dark crowd was as white as snow. In every hand a white handkerchief was raised, fluttering and waving above every head. And the shout once taken up, drowned the strong voices of the singers as long-drawn thunder drowns the pattering of the raindrops and the sighing of the wind. The wonderful face, that seemed to be carved out of transparent alabaster, smiled and slowly turned from side to side as it passed by. The thin, fragile hand moved unceasingly, blessing the people.

Orsino Saracinesca saw and heard, and his young face turned pale while his lips set themselves. By his side, a head shorter than he, stood his father, lost in thought as he gazed at the mighty spectacle of what had been, and of what might still have been, but for one day of history's surprises.

Orsino said nothing, but he glanced at Sant' Ilario's face as though to remind his father of what he had said half an hour earlier; and the elder man knew that there had been truth in the boy's words. There were soldiers in the church, and they were not Italian soldiers—some thousands of them in all, perhaps. They were armed, and there were at the very least computation thirty thousand strong, grown men in the crowd. And the crowd was on fire. Had there been a hundred, nay a score, of desperate, devoted leaders there, who knows what bloody work might not have been done in the city before the sun went down? Who knows what new surprises history might have found for her play? The thought must have crossed many minds at that moment. But no one stirred; the religious ceremony remained a religious ceremony and nothing more; holy peace reigned within the walls, and the hour of peril glided away undisturbed to take its place among memories of good.

"The world is worn out!" thought Orsino. "The days of great deeds are over. Let us eat and drink, for to-

morrow we die—they are right in teaching me their philosophy."

A gloomy, sullen melancholy took hold of the boy's young nature, a passing mood, perhaps, but one which left its mark upon him. For he was at that age when a very little thing will turn the balance of a character, when an older man's thoughtless words may direct half a lifetime in a good or evil channel, being recalled and repeated for a score of years. Who is it that does not remember that day when an impatient "I will," or a defiant "I will not," turned the whole current of his existence in the one direction or the other, towards good or evil, towards success or failure? Who, that has fought his way against odds into the front rank, has forgotten the woman's look that gave him courage, or the man's sneer that braced nerve and muscle to strike the first of many hard blows?

The depression which fell upon Orsino was lasting, for that morning at least. The stupendous pageant went on before him, the choirs sang, the sweet boys' voices answered back, like an angel's song, out of the lofty dome, the incense rose in columns through the streaming sunlight as the high mass proceeded. Again the Pope was raised upon the chair and borne out into the nave, whence in the solemn silence the thin, clear, aged voice intoned the benediction three times, slowly rising and falling, pausing and beginning again. Once more the enormous shout broke out, louder and deeper than ever, as the procession moved away. Then all was over.

Orsino saw and heard, but the first impression was gone, and the thrill did not come back.

"It was a fine sight," he said to his father, as the shout died away.

"A fine sight! Have you no stronger expression than that?"

"No," answered Orsino, "I have not."

The ladies were already coming out of the tribunes, and Orsino saw his father give his arm to Corona to lead

her through the crowd. Naturally enough, Maria Consuelo and Donna Tullia came out together very soon after her. Orsino offered to pilot the former through the confusion, and she accepted gratefully. Donna Tullia walked beside them.

"You do not know me, Don Orsino," said she, with a gracious smile.

"I beg your pardon—you are the Countess del Ferice—I have not been back from England long, and have not had an opportunity of being presented."

Whatever might be Orsino's weaknesses, shyness was certainly not one of them, and as he made the civil answer he calmly looked at Donna Tullia as though to inquire what in the world she wished to accomplish in making his acquaintance. He had been so situated during the ceremony as not to see that the two ladies had fallen into conversation.

"Will you introduce me?" said Maria Consuelo. "We have been talking together."

She spoke in a low voice, but the words could hardly have escaped Donna Tullia. Orsino was very much surprised and not by any means pleased, for he saw that the elder woman had forced the introduction by a rather vulgar trick. Nevertheless, he could not escape.

"Since you have been good enough to recognise me," he said rather stiffly to Donna Tullia, "permit me to make you acquainted with Madame d'Aranjuez d'Aragona."

Both ladies nodded and smiled the smile of the newly introduced. Donna Tullia at once began to wonder how it was that a person with such a name should have but a plain "madame" to put before it. But her curiosity was not satisfied on this occasion.

"How absurd society is!" she exclaimed. "Madame d'Aranjuez and I have been talking all the morning, quite like old friends—and now we need an introduction!"

Maria Consuelo glanced at Orsino as

though expecting him to make some remark. But he said nothing.

"What should we do without conventions!" she said, for the sake of saying something.

By this time they were threading the endless passages of the sacristy building, on their way to the Piazza Santa Marta. Sant' Ilario and Corona were not far in front of them. At a turn in the corridor Corona looked back.

"There is Orsino talking to Tullia Del Ferice!" she exclaimed in great surprise. "And he has given his arm to that other lady who was next to her in the tribune."

"What does it matter?" asked Sant' Ilario indifferently. "By the by, the other lady is that Madame d'Aranjuez he talks about."

"Is she any relation of your mother's family, Giovanni?"

"Not that I am aware of. She may have married some younger son of whom I never heard."

"You do not seem to care whom Orsino knows," said Corona rather reproachfully.

"Orsino is grown up, dear. You must not forget that."

"Yes—I suppose he is," Corona answered with a little sigh. "But surely you will not encourage him to cultivate the Del Ferice!"

"I fancy it would take a deal of encouragement to drive him to that," said Sant' Ilario with a laugh. "He has better taste."

There was some confusion outside. People were waiting for their carriages, and as most of them knew each other intimately every one was talking at once. Donna Tullia nodded here and there, but Maria Consuelo noticed that her salutations were coldly returned. Orsino and his two companions stood a little aloof from the crowd. Just then the Saracinesca carriage drove up.

"Who is that magnificent woman?" asked Maria Consuelo, as Corona got in.

"My mother," said Orsino. "My father is getting in now."

"There comes my carriage! Please help me."

A modest hired brougham made its appearance. Orsino hoped that Madame d'Aranjuez would offer him a seat. But he was mistaken.

"I am afraid mine is miles away," said Donna Tullia. "Good-bye, I shall be so glad if you will come and see me." She held out her hand.

"May I not take you home?" asked Maria Consuelo. "There is just room—it will be better than waiting here."

Donna Tullia hesitated a moment, and then accepted, to Orsino's great annoyance. He helped the two ladies to get in, and shut the door.

"Come soon," said Maria Consuelo, giving him her hand out of the window.

He was inclined to be angry, but the look that accompanied the invitation did its work satisfactorily.

"He is very young," thought Maria Consuelo, as she drove away.

"She can be very amusing. It is worth while," said Orsino to himself as he passed in front of the next carriage, and walked out upon the small square.

He had not gone far, hindered as he was at every step, when some one touched his arm. It was Spicca, looking more cadaverous and exhausted than usual.

"Are you going home in a cab?" he asked. "Then let us go together."

They got out of the square, scarcely knowing how they had accomplished the feat. Spicca seemed nervous as well as tired, and he leaned on Orsino's arm.

"There was a chance lost this morning," said the latter when they were under the colonnade. He felt sure of a bitter answer from the keen old man.

"Why did you not seize it then?" asked Spicca. "Do you expect old men like me to stand up and yell for a republic, or a restoration, or a monarchy, or whichever of the other seven plagues of Egypt you desire? I have not voice enough left to call

a cab, much less to howl down a kingdom."

"I wonder what would have happened if I, or some one else, had tried."

"You would have spent the night in prison with a few kindred spirits. After all, that would have been better than making love to old Donna Tullia and her young friend."

Orsino laughed.

"You have good eyes," he said.

"So have you, Orsino. Use them. You will see something odd if you look where you were looking this morning. Do you know what sort of a place this world is?"

"It is a dull place. I have found that out already."

"You are mistaken. It is hell. Do you mind calling that cab?"

Orsino stared a moment at his companion, and then hailed the passing conveyance.

CHAPTER VI.

ORSINO had shown less anxiety to see Madame d'Aranjuez than might perhaps have been expected. In the ten days which had elapsed between the sitting at Gouache's studio and the first of January he had only once made an attempt to find her at home, and that attempt had failed. He had not even seen her passing in the street, and he had not been conscious of any uncontrollable desire to catch a glimpse of her at any price.

But he had not forgotten her existence, as he would certainly have forgotten that of a wholly indifferent person in the same time. On the contrary, he had thought of her frequently and had indulged in many speculations concerning her, wondering among other matters why he did not take more trouble to see her since she occupied his thoughts so much. He did not know that he was in reality hesitating, for he would not have acknowledged to himself that he could be in danger of falling seriously in love. He was too young

to admit such a possibility, and the character which he admired and meant to assume was altogether too cold and superior to such weaknesses. To do him justice, he was really not of the sort to fall in love at first sight. Persons capable of a self-imposed dualism rarely are, for the second nature they build up on the foundation of their own is never wholly artificial. The disposition to certain modes of thought and habits of bearing is really present, and is sufficiently proved by their admiration of both. Very shy persons, for instance, invariably admire very self-possessed ones, and in trying to imitate them occasionally exhibit a cold-blooded arrogance which is amazing. Timothy Titmouse secretly looks up to Don Juan as his ideal, and after half a lifetime of failure outdoes his model, to the horror of his friends. Dionysus masks as Hercules, and the fox is sometimes not unsuccessful in his saint's disguise. To be short, Orsino Saracinesca was too enthusiastic to be wholly cold, and too thoughtful to be thoroughly enthusiastic. He saw things differently according to his moods, and being dissatisfied, he tried to make one mood prevail constantly over the other. In a mean nature the double view often makes an untruthful individual; in one possessing honourable instincts it frequently leads to unhappiness. Affectation then becomes aspiration, and the man's failure to impose on others is forgotten in his misery at failing to impose upon himself.

The few words Orsino had exchanged with Maria Consuelo on the morning of the great ceremony recalled vividly the pleasant hour he had spent with her ten days earlier, and he determined to see her as soon as possible. He was out of conceit with himself and consequently with all those who knew him, and he looked forward with pleasure to the conversation of an attractive woman who could have no preconceived opinion of him, and who could take him at his own estimate. He was curious,

too, to find out something more definite in regard to her. She was mysterious, and the mystery pleased him. She had admitted that her deceased husband had spoken of being connected with the Saracinesca, but he could not discover where the relationship lay. Spicca's very odd remark, too, seemed to point to her in some way which Orsino could not understand, and he remembered her having said that she had heard of Spicca. Her husband had doubtless been an Italian of Spanish descent, but she had given no clue to her own nationality, and she did not look Spanish, in spite of her name, Maria Consuelo. As no one in Rome knew her it was impossible to get any information whatever. It was all very interesting.

Accordingly, late on the afternoon of the second of January, Orsino called and was led to the door of a small sitting-room on the second floor of the hotel. The servant shut the door behind him and Orsino found himself alone. A lamp with a pretty shade was burning on the table and beside it an ugly blue glass vase contained a few flowers, common roses, but fresh and fragrant. Two or three new books in yellow paper covers lay scattered upon the hideous velvet table-cloth, and beside one of them Orsino noticed a magnificent paper-cutter of chiselled silver, bearing a large monogram done in brilliants and rubies. The thing contrasted oddly with its surroundings and attracted the light. An easy chair was drawn up to the table, an abominable object covered with perfectly new yellow satin. A small red morocco cushion, of the kind used in travelling, was balanced on the back, and there was a depression in it, as though some one's head had lately rested there.

Orsino noticed all these details as he stood waiting for Madame d'Aranjuez to appear, and they were not without interest to him, for each one told a story, and the stories were contradictory. The room was not encumbered with those numberless objects

which most women scatter about them within an hour after reaching an hotel. Yet Madame d'Aranjuez must have been at least a month in Rome. The room smelt neither of perfume nor of cigarettes, but of the roses, which was better, and a little of the lamp, which was much worse. The lady's only possessions seemed to be three books, a travelling cushion, and a somewhat too gorgeous paper-cutter; and these few objects were perfectly new. He glanced at the books; they were of the latest, and only one had been cut. The cushion might have been bought that morning. Not a breath had tarnished the polished blade of the silver knife.

A door opened softly and Orsino drew himself up as some one pushed in the heavy, vivid curtains. But it was not Madame d'Aranjuez. A small dark woman of middle age, with down-cast eyes and exceedingly black hair, came forward a step.

"The signora will come presently," she said in Italian, in a very low voice, as though she were almost afraid of hearing herself speak.

She was gone in a moment, as noiselessly as she had come. This was evidently the silent maid of whom Gouache had talked. The few words she had spoken had revealed to Orsino the fact that she was an Italian from the north, for she had the unmistakable accent of the Piedmontese, whose own language is comprehensible only by themselves.

Orsino prepared to wait some time, supposing that the message could hardly have been sent without an object. But another minute had not elapsed before Maria Consuelo herself appeared. In the soft lamplight her clear white skin looked very pale and her auburn hair almost red. She wore one of those nondescript garments which we have elected to call tea-gowns, and Orsino, who had learned to criticise dress as he had learned Latin grammar, saw that the tea-gown was good and the lace real. The colours produced no impression upon him what-

ever. As a matter of fact they were dark, being combined in various shades of olive.

Maria Consuelo looked at her visitor and held out her hand, but said nothing. She did not even smile, and Orsino began to fancy that he had chosen an unfortunate moment for his visit.

"It was very good of you to let me come," he said, waiting for her to sit down.

Still she said nothing. She placed the red morocco cushion carefully in the particular position which would be most comfortable, turned the shade of the lamp a little which, of course, produced no change whatever in the direction of the light, pushed one of the books half across the table, and at last sat down in the easy chair. Orsino sat down near her, holding his hat upon his knee. He wondered whether she had heard him speak, or whether she might not be one of those people who are painfully shy when there is no third person present.

"I think it was very good of you to come," she said at last, when she was comfortably settled.

"I wish goodness were always so easy," answered Orsino with alacrity.

"Is it your ambition to be good?" asked Maria Consuelo with a smile.

"It should be. But it is not a career."

"Then you do not believe in saints?"

"Not until they are canonised and made articles of belief—unless you are one, madame."

"I have thought of trying it," answered Maria Consuelo calmly. "Saintship is a career, even in society, whatever you may say to the contrary. It has attractions, after all."

"Not equal to those of the other side. Every one admits that. The majority is evidently in favour of sin, and if we are to believe in modern institutions, we must believe that majorities are right."

"Then the hero is always wrong, for he is the enthusiastic individual

who is always for facing odds, and if no one disagrees with him he is very unhappy. Yet there are heroes——”

“Where?” asked Orsino. “The heroes people talk of ride bronze horses on inaccessible pedestals. When the bell rings for a revolution they are all knocked down and new ones are set up in their places—also executed by the best artists—and the old ones are cast into cannon to knock to pieces the ideas they invented. That is called history.”

“You take a cheerful and encouraging view of the world’s history, Don Orsino.”

“The world is made for us, and we must accept it. But we may criticise it. There is nothing to the contrary in the contract.”

“In the social contract? Are you going to talk to me about Jean-Jacques?”

“Have you read him, madame?”

“No woman who respects herself——” began Maria Consuelo, quoting the famous preface.

“I see that you have,” said Orsino, with a laugh. “I have not.”

“Nor I.”

To Orsino’s surprise, Madame d’Aranjuez blushed. He could not have told why he was pleased, nor why her change of colour seemed so unexpected.

“Speaking of history,” he said, after a very slight pause, “why did you thank me yesterday for having got you a card?”

“Did you not speak to Gouache about it?”

“I said something—I forget what. Did he manage it?”

“Of course, I had his wife’s place. She could not go. Do you dislike being thanked for your good offices? Are you so modest as that?”

“Not in the least, but I hate misunderstandings, though I will get all the credit I can for what I have not done, like other people. When I saw that you knew the Del Ferice, I thought that perhaps she had been exerting herself.”

“Why do you hate her so?” asked Maria Consuelo.

“I do not hate her. She does not exist—that is all.”

“Why does she not exist, as you call it? She is a very good-natured woman. Tell me the truth. Everybody hates her—I saw that by the way they bowed to her while we were waiting—why? There must be a reason. Is she a—an incorrect person?”

Orsino laughed.

“No. That is the point at which existence is more likely to begin than to end.”

“How cynical you are! I do not like that. Tell me about Madame Del Ferice.”

“Very well. To begin with, she is a relation of mine.”

“Seriously?”

“Seriously. Of course that gives me a right to handle the whole dictionary of abuse against her.”

“Of course. Are you going to do that?”

“No. You would call me cynical. I do not like you to call me by bad names, madame.”

“I had an idea that men liked it,” observed Maria Consuelo gravely.

“One does not like to hear disagreeable truths.”

“Then it is the truth? Go on. You have forgotten what we were talking about.”

“Not at all. Donna Tullia, my second, third, or fourth cousin, was married once upon a time to a certain Mayer.”

“And left him? How interesting!”

“No, madame. He left her—very suddenly, I believe—for another world. Better or worse? Who can say? Considering his past life, worse, I suppose; but considering that he was not obliged to take Donna Tullia with him, decidedly better.”

“You certainly hate her. Then she married Del Ferice.”

“Then she married Del Ferice—before I was born. She is fabulously old. Mayer left her very rich, and

without conditions. Del Ferice was an impossible person. My father nearly killed him in a duel once—also before I was born. I never knew what it was about. Del Ferice was a spy, in the old days when spies got a living in a Rome——”

“Ah! I see it all now!” exclaimed Maria Consuelo. “Del Ferice is White, and you are Black. Of course you hate each other. You need not tell me any more.”

“How you take that for granted!”

“Is it not perfectly clear? Do not talk to me of like and dislike when your dreadful parties have anything to do with either! Besides, if I had any sympathy with either side it would be for the Whites. But the whole thing is absurd, complicated, mediæval, feudal—anything you like except sensible. Your intolerance is—intolerable.”

“True tolerance should tolerate even intolerance,” observed Orsino smartly.

“That sounds like one of the puzzles of pronunciation like ‘*in un piatto poco cupo poco pepe pisto cape*,’” laughed Maria Consuelo. “Tolerably tolerable tolerance tolerates tolerable tolerance intolerably——”

“You speak Italian?” asked Orsino, surprised by her glib enunciation of the difficult sentence she had quoted. “Why are we talking a foreign language?”

“I cannot really speak Italian. I have an Italian maid who speaks French. But she taught me that puzzle.”

“It is odd—your maid is a Piedmontese and you have a good accent.”

“Have I? I am very glad. But tell me, is it not absurd that you should hate these people as you do—you cannot deny it—merely because they are Whites?”

“Everything in life is absurd if you take the opposite point of view. Lunatics find endless amusement in watching sane people.”

“And, of course, you are the sane people,” observed Maria Consuelo.

“Of course.”

“What becomes of me? I suppose

I do not exist? You would not be rude enough to class me with the lunatics.”

“Certainly not. You will of course choose to be a Black.”

“In order to be discontented, as you are?”

“Discontented?”

“Yes. Are you not utterly out of sympathy with your surroundings? Are you not hampered at every step by a network of traditions which have no meaning to your intelligence, but which are laid on you like a harness upon a horse, and in which you are driven your daily little round of tiresome amusement—or dissipation? Do you not hate the Corso as an omnibus horse hates it? Do you not really hate the very faces of all those people who effectually prevent you from using your own intelligence, your own strength—your own heart? One sees it in your face. You are too young to be tired of life. No, I am not going to call you a boy, though I am older than you, Don Orsino. You will find people enough in your own surroundings to call you a boy—because you are not yet so utterly tamed and wearied as they are, and for no other reason. You are a man. I do not know your age, but you do not talk as boys do. You are a man—then be a man altogether, be independent—use your hands for something better than throwing mud at other people’s houses merely because they are new!”

Orsino looked at her in astonishment. This was certainly not the sort of conversation he had anticipated when he had entered the room.

“You are surprised because I speak like this,” she said after a short pause. “You are a Saracinesca and I am—a stranger, here to-day and gone to-morrow, whom you will probably never see again. It is amusing, is it not? Why do you not laugh?”

Maria Consuelo smiled and as usual her strong red lips closed as soon as she had finished speaking, a habit which lent the smile something unusual, half-mysterious, and self-contained.

"I see nothing to laugh at," answered Orsino. "Did the mythological personage whose name I have forgotten laugh when the sphinx proposed the riddle to him?"

"That is the third time within the last few days that I have been compared to a sphinx by you or Gouache. It lacks originality in the end."

"I was not thinking of being original. I was too much interested. Your riddle is the problem of my life."

"The resemblance ceases there. I cannot eat you up if you do not guess the answer—or if you do not take my advice. I am not prepared to go so far as that."

"Was it advice? It sounded more like a question."

"I would not ask one when I am sure of getting no answer. Besides, I do not like being laughed at."

"What has that to do with the matter? Why imagine anything so impossible?"

"After all—perhaps it is more foolish to say, 'I advise you to do so and so,' than to ask, 'Why do you not do so and so?' Advice is always disagreeable and the adviser is always more or less ridiculous. Advice brings its own punishment."

"Is that not cynical?" asked Orsino.

"No. Why? What is the worst thing you can do to your social enemy? Prevail upon him to give you his counsel, act upon it—it will of course turn out badly—then say, 'I feared this would happen, but as you advised me I did not like——' and so on! That is simple and always effectual. Try it."

"Not for worlds!"

"I did not mean with me," answered Maria Consuelo with a laugh.

"No. I am afraid there are other reasons which will prevent me from making a career for myself," said Orsino thoughtfully.

Maria Consuelo saw by his face that the subject was a serious one with him, as she had already guessed that it must be, and one which would always interest him. She therefore

let it drop, keeping it in reserve in case the conversation flagged.

"I am going to see Madame Del Ferice to-morrow," she observed, changing the subject.

"Do you think that is necessary?"

"Since I wish it! I have not your reasons for avoiding her."

"I offended you the other day, madame, did I not? You remember—when I offered my services in a social way."

"No—you amused me," answered Maria Consuelo coolly, and watching to see how he would take the rebuke.

But, young as Orsino was, he was a match for her in self-possession.

"I am very glad," he answered without a trace of annoyance. "I feared you were displeased."

Maria Consuelo smiled again, and her momentary coldness vanished. The answer delighted her, and did more to interest her in Orsino than fifty clever sayings could have done, she resolved to push the question a little further.

"I will be frank," she said.

"It is always best," answered Orsino, beginning to suspect that something very tortuous was coming. His disbelief in phrases of the kind, though originally artificial, was becoming profound.

"Yes, I will be quite frank," she repeated. "You do not wish me to know the Del Ferice and their set, and you do wish me to know the people you like."

"Evidently."

"Why should I not do as I please?"

She was clearly trying to entrap him into a foolish answer, and he grew more and more wary.

"It would be very strange if you did not," answered Orsino without hesitation.

"Why, again?"

"Because you are absolutely free to make your own choice."

"And if my choice does not meet with your approval?" she asked.

"What can I say, madame? I and my friends will be the losers, not you."

Orsino had kept his temper admirably, and he did not suffer a hasty word to escape his lips nor a shadow of irritation to appear in his face. Yet she had pressed him in a way which was little short of rude. She was silent for a few seconds, during which Orsino watched her face as she turned it slightly away from him and from the lamp. In reality he was wondering why she was not more communicative about herself, and speculating as to whether her silence in that quarter proceeded from the consciousness of a perfectly assured position in the world, or from the fact that she had something to conceal; and this idea led him to congratulate himself upon not having been obliged to act immediately upon his first proposal by bringing about an acquaintance between Madame d'Aranjuez and his mother. This uncertainty lent a spice of interest to the acquaintance. He knew enough of the world already to be sure that Maria Consuelo was born and bred in that state of life to which it has pleased Providence to call the social elect. But the peculiar people sometimes do strange things, and afterwards establish themselves in foreign cities where their doings are not likely to be known for some time. Not that Orsino cared what this particular stranger's past might have been. But he knew that his mother would care very much indeed, if Orsino wished her to know the mysterious lady, and would sift the matter very thoroughly before asking her to the Palazzo Saracinesca. Donna Tullia, on the other hand, had committed herself to the acquaintance on her own responsibility, evidently taking it for granted that if Orsino knew Madame d'Aranjuez, the latter must be socially irreproachable. It amused Orsino to imagine the fat countess's rage if she turned out to have made a mistake.

"I shall be the loser too," said Maria Consuelo, in a different tone, "if I make a bad choice. But I cannot draw back. I took her to her house in my carriage. She seemed to

take a fancy to me——" she laughed a little.

Orsino smiled, as though to imply that the circumstance did not surprise him.

"And she said she would come to see me. As a stranger I could not do less than insist upon making the first visit, and I named the day—or rather she did. I am going to-morrow."

"To-morrow? Tuesday is her day. You will meet all her friends."

"Do you mean to say that people still have days in Rome?" Maria Consuelo did not look pleased.

"Some people do—very few. Most people prefer to be at home one evening in the week."

"What sort of people are Madame Del Ferice's friends?"

"Excellent people."

"Why are you so cautious?"

"Because you are about to be one of them, madame."

"Am I? No, I will not begin another catechism! You are too clever—I shall never get a direct answer from you."

"Not in that way," answered Orsino with a frankness that made his companion smile.

"How then?"

"I think you would know how," he replied gravely, and he fixed his young black eyes on her with an expression that made her half close her own.

"I should think you would make a good actor," she said softly.

"Provided that I might be allowed to be sincere between the acts."

"That sounds well. A little ambiguous perhaps. Your sincerity might or might not take the same direction as the part you had been acting."

"That would depend entirely upon yourself, madame."

This time Maria Consuelo opened her eyes instead of closing them.

"You do not lack—what shall I say?—a certain assurance. You do not waste time!"

She laughed merrily, and Orsino laughed with her.

"We are between the acts now," he said. "The curtain goes up to-morrow and you join the enemy."

"Come with me, then."

"In your carriage? I shall be enchanted."

"No. You know I do not mean that. Come with me to the enemy's camp. It will be very amusing."

Orsino shook his head.

"I would rather die—if possible, at your feet, madame."

"Are you afraid to call upon Madame Del Ferice?"

"More than of death itself."

"How can you say that?"

"The conditions of the life to come are doubtful—there might be a chance for me. There is no doubt at all as to what would happen if I went to see Madame Del Ferice."

"Is your father so severe with you?" asked Maria Consuelo with a little scorn.

"Alas, madame, I am not sensitive to ridicule," answered Orsino, quite unmoved. "I grant that there is something wanting in my character."

Maria Consuelo had hoped to find a weak point, and had failed, though indeed there were many in the young man's armour. She was a little annoyed, both at her own lack of judgment and because it would have amused her to see Orsino in an element so unfamiliar to him as that in which Donna Tullia lived.

"And there is nothing which would induce you to go there?" she asked.

"At present—nothing," Orsino answered coldly.

"At present—but in the future of all possible possibilities?"

"I shall undoubtedly go there. It is only the unforeseen which invariably happens."

"I think so too."

"Of course. I will illustrate the proverb by bidding you good-evening," said Orsino, laughing as he rose. "By this time the conviction must have formed itself in your mind that I was

never going. The unforeseen happens. I go."

Maria Consuelo would have been glad if he had stayed even longer, for he amused her and interested her, and she did not look forward with pleasure to the lonely evening she was to spend in the hotel.

"I am generally at home at this hour," she said, giving him her hand.

"Then, if you will allow me? Thanks. Good-evening, madame."

Their eyes met for a moment, and then Orsino left the room. As he lit his cigarette in the porch of the hotel, he said to himself that he had not wasted his hour, and he was pleasantly conscious of that inward and spiritual satisfaction which every very young man feels when he is aware of having appeared at his best in the society of a woman alone. Youth without vanity is only premature old age after all.

"She is certainly more than pretty," he said to himself, affecting to be critical when he was indeed convinced. "Her mouth is fabulous, but it is well shaped and the rest is perfect—no, the nose is insignificant, and one of those yellow eyes wanders a little. These are not perfections. But what does it matter? The whole is charming, whatever the parts may be. I wish she would not go to that horrible fat woman's tea to-morrow."

Such were the observations which Orsino thought fit to make to himself, but which by no means represented all that he felt, for they took no notice whatever of that extreme satisfaction at having talked well with Maria Consuelo, which in reality dominated every other sensation just then. He was well enough accustomed to consideration, though his only taste of society had been enjoyed during the winter vacations of the last two years. He was not the greatest match in the Roman matrimonial market for nothing, and he was perfectly well aware of his advantages in this respect. He possessed that keen, business-like appreciation of his value as a marriageable man which seems to characterise

the young generation of to-day, and he was not mistaken in his estimate. It was made sufficiently clear to him at every turn that he had but to ask in order to receive. But he had not the slightest intention of marrying at one-and-twenty as several of his old schoolfellows were doing, and he was sensible enough to foresee that his position as a desirable son-in-law would soon cause him more annoyance than amusement.

Madame d'Aranjuez was doubtless aware that she could not marry him if she wished to do so. She was several years older than he—he admitted the fact rather reluctantly—she was a widow, and she seemed to have no particular social position. These were excellent reasons against matrimony, but they were also equally excellent reasons for being pleased with himself at having produced a favourable impression on her.

He walked rapidly along the crowded street, glancing carelessly at the people who passed and at the brilliantly lighted windows of the shops. He passed the door of the club, where he was already becoming known for rather reckless play, and he quite forgot that a number of men were probably spending an hour at the tables before dinner, a fact which would hardly have escaped his memory if he had not been more than usually occupied with pleasant thoughts. He did not need the excitement of *baccarat* nor the stimulus of brandy and soda-water, for his brain

was already both excited and stimulated, though he was not at once aware of it. But it became clear to him when he suddenly found himself standing before the steps of the Capitol in the gloomy square of the *Ara Celi*, wondering what in the world had brought him so far out of his way.

"What a fool I am!" he exclaimed impatiently, as he turned back and walked in the direction of his home. "And yet she told me that I would make a good actor. They say that an actor should never be carried away by his part."

At dinner that evening he was alternately talkative and very silent.

"Where have you been to-day, Orsino?" asked his father, looking at him curiously.

"I spent half an hour with Madame d'Aranjuez, and then went for a walk," answered Orsino with sudden indifference.

"What is she like?" asked Corona.

"Clever—at least in Rome." There was an odd, nervous sharpness about the answer.

Old Saracinesca raised his keen eyes without lifting his head and looked hard at his grandson. He was a little bent in his great old age.

"The boy is in love!" he exclaimed abruptly, and a laugh that was still deep and ringing followed the words. Orsino recovered his self-possession and smiled carelessly.

Corona was thoughtful during the remainder of the meal.

(To be continued.)

THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE TRUE.

THE apostles of University Extension are conscious, it is to be presumed, that there are some things to be said against their mission, and that there are some people who say them. It is not now my purpose to repeat these things. For the present, ignoring both that which is plainly mischievous and that which may only tend to breed mischief, I wish to cordially acknowledge whatever is good in a scheme for which its staunchest supporters will hardly as yet claim perfection. Let it be cheerfully granted then that a little knowledge is not always and inevitably a dangerous thing. Let it be granted that it is better to know something even at second hand of the great men on whose shoulders we have climbed to our present position, than to proceed "in facetious and rejoicing ignorance" of who they were, when they lived, and what they did. It is at least well to impress on the rising generation that there have been poets before Lord Tennyson and prose-writers before Mr. Ruskin, painters before Mr. Sargent and playwrights before Mr. Pinero; that fiction did not begin with Mr. George Meredith, nor criticism with Mr. Pater; that the foundations of philosophy were not laid by the author of *First Principles*, nor the foundations of theology by the authors of *Lux Mundi*. In short, all teaching may be fruitful which tends to convey the great truth that the words *Let there be Light* were spoken before the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Let this much, then, be granted. Nor need those who grant it abandon their original position, that to know a few things well is better for man, in whatsoever rank of life he be born, for whatsoever work in life he may be bred, than to know many things ill. But art is long, time is short, the

desire of the moth for the star is pressing. If we cannot do the thing that we would, let us do, so well as may be, the thing that we can. The Duke of Wellington, honest man, did not approve of the Reform Bill; but he preferred even the Reform Bill to Civil War.

Among the gentlemen who at the close of last year waited on the President of the Privy Council to bespeak the aid of Government for University Extension were some over whom the Plain Man may possibly shake his head. Their names will hardly suggest to him the virtues of prudence, moderation, sanity, all that the wise Greek comprehended in the word *σωφροσύνη*—virtues so excellent in themselves, so preeminently needful for all entrusted with the training of the young idea. But among them was one to whom all must listen with respect. There is no man living better qualified than Mr. Jebb to form and express an opinion on all matters of education and learning. He made the best case possible for his colleagues. The scheme, it is known, works mainly, or at least largely, by means of local lectures, which are said to penetrate into districts where the schools and colleges now supported by Government cannot reach; and it was for these lectures that the State-grant was asked. The encouragement recently given by Government to scientific studies had, it was averred, reacted somewhat harmfully upon history and literature. If the great impetus given to science should throw history and literature into the background the primary object of these lectures would be defeated. That object, said Mr. Jebb, was not to train skilled artisans or specialists in any branch of knowledge, but to raise the whole education of the citizen, to

enlarge his mental horizon, to draw out his powers of thought and imagination, to render his patriotism more intelligent, and his conception of life more fruitful. For that purpose the study of history and literature supplied elements for which no satisfactory substitute could be found. This is kindly meant and well expressed. It may indeed be that its wisdom is less certain than its kindliness. There are citizens in this great State to whom this enlarging and fructifying process might not be much more useful than the pair of lace ruffles were to the unfortunate who wanted a shirt. But doubtless it is not proposed to draw them all into the same net; and with the design itself, apart from its application, no fault can be found. What a masterstroke of policy too is that, *to render his patriotism more intelligent!* What Conservative Government could look coldly on a scheme that is bound to make every citizen a Conservative? To be sure Lord Cranbrook was forced to explain that he could make no promises, and that in fact neither the power of giving nor of withholding aid was in his hands. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was, he intimated, the proper person to apply to; and that functionary, though he happens in the present instance to be one who would never discourage any plan for genuine education, has not unlimited funds at his disposal. Lord Cranbrook's attitude was in short much like that of the statesman in the Enchanted Palace who "smiling put the question by." Perhaps the deputation did not expect much else. There was a certain vagueness about their proposals which suggested rather a general wish that something might be done, than a definite plan of anything that could be done. But that the deputation thought it worth their while to address the Government on the subject at all, and the general tenor of the answer they received, help to set the scheme on a sounder base than it has yet perhaps found in public estimation, and serve to raise it out of the region

of mere experiment into a more practical sphere. It becomes its promoters therefore to look more warily than ever to their steps, to be more than ever careful that the place they claim in the universal scheme of education should be grounded on right reason, that it should really work to those useful ends which Mr Jebb has defined for it.

It appears from Lord Cranbrook's answer that he had prepared himself to receive the deputation by the perusal of sundry books which they had caused to be sent to him beforehand. The University Extension Movement has quite a little library of its own now, as everyone knows. I wonder whether among the books selected for his lordship's information was one on *The Philosophy of the Beautiful*, prepared by Professor Knight of St. Andrew's University, and lately published by Mr. Murray, if his lordship read it, and whether he considered it to come under the head of the "kind of instruction which everybody agrees is most valuable and has been most valuable throughout the country." Lord Cranbrook saw and confessed a difficulty in the gap between the little students swept in by the Government net of elementary education and those of a larger growth to whom the University Extension lectures appeal; the former range from four to thirteen years, the latter from seventeen years onward. "You have," said he, "an enormous gap to fill up, and at present I can hardly imagine that your Oxford and Cambridge Extension scheme touches anything more than the mere skirt of those who are to be brought in from the mere elementary schools. Your students must be those who have had some kind of education, of a different kind and beyond that given in the elementary school, in order that they may be in a condition to profit by the sort of instruction which you give." Did the instruction given in *The Philosophy of the Beautiful* strike his lordship, I wonder, as the sort by which these students were likely to profit?

The little volume grew out of a course of lectures delivered first to the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, and afterwards to audiences of University Extension students in London and Cheltenham. They were originally preceded by an attempt at a constructive theory of the Philosophy of Beauty. But this Professor Knight has deemed it expedient to omit—very wisely, as I venture to think—and has preferred to confine himself in the main to a historical sketch of past opinion and tendency. He has shown in his preface many good reasons for his judgment; one being—for the Professor is nothing if not candid—that many people, “philosophers of renown” and by no means inappreciative of beauty, deny that “any satisfactory conclusion can be reached in the field of æsthetics”, think, to put it familiarly, that this way mystification, if not madness, lies. “They point to the discord of the schools, their rival theories, the vagueness of argument—a maximum of debate with a minimum of result. They remind us how it was the ambition of every aspirant in philosophy, in his undergraduate days, to solve the problem of the Beautiful; and they say, with the astronomer-poet of Persia, Omar Khayyâm—

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument

About it and about; but evermore
Came out, by the same door, where in I
went.”

There is much to be said for this sort of philosophers. On many sides the world might be both a happier and a wiser place if more of its inhabitants were content “to theorize no longer, to give up the philosophic quest, and return to the earlier state of mere reciprocity and enjoyment.” Professor Knight admits the problem to be perennial; there is no final goal. “We at present stand upon a small (occasionally sunlit) promontory, stretching out from the land of primal mystery whence we came, into the ocean of a still vaster ignor-

ance, over which we must set out.” Nevertheless to record all the theoretic guesses, conjectures, and approximate solutions is valuable, not only because they form links in a chain that shall never be completed, but because they are also “the progressive unfolding of the Universal Reason, which immeasurably transcends that of the individual and is nevertheless its deepest essence.” And it has yet another value, which may perhaps be more generally intelligible to the individual reason, and which mine at least does most cordially accept: “Accurate knowledge of previous speculation is always our best guide to the study of a problem that is perennial; and while the history of Philosophy shows that the most perfect theory is doomed to oblivion no less certainly than the imperfect ones, and that they all revive after temporary extinction, *we can contribute nothing of value to the controversies of our time by striving after an originality that dispenses with the past.*” If not absolutely beautiful the passage here italicised is most certainly true and good; it might, let me observe in passing, be recommended to the attention of certain members of the New English Art Club; and the right study of the Beautiful we are wisely (and assuredly not superfluously) reminded, must inevitably lead to the Good and True. The Professor claims for it that it is likely to prove, that in fact it has been found to prove, a corrective to cynicism, and he quotes the words put by Matthew Arnold in Goethe’s mouth:

The end is everywhere,
Art still has truth, take refuge there!

It is obvious [he says] that the study cannot be either begun or carried on in the *nil admirari* mood of the cynic. Even when the search for “first principles” has been abandoned, metaphysics given up, and the “categorical imperative” deemed baseless, a reliable footing has been found in the sphere of the Beautiful, whence a way may be discovered leading back into that of the True and the Good. Certainly some have found it possible, after the disintegration of belief in the intellectual and moral sphere, to resist further loss by hold-

ing fast to what can be proved within the sphere of Art; and they have afterwards found some help in the solution of other problems by means of it. The light which it casts on the central enquiry of Theism, I hope to show in my second volume.

May it be permitted to hope that the forthcoming volume will not be included in the University Extension Library? Most curious and interesting it cannot fail to be; but the connection between Theism and the Beautiful will surely puzzle and hardly profit the budding student of seventeen. However, no one, whether seventeen or seventy, will dispute that it is better to believe even in a Philosophy of the Beautiful than to believe in nothing; and this I take to be the Professor's meaning.

And this brings me to a problem which perplexes me more than all the theories of the Philosophy of the Beautiful that have vexed the unquiet soul of man since Socrates imparted to Agathon's guests the doctrines of the wise Diotima. For what particular class of students is this little book designed; of what age will they be, of what training, of what sex almost I would ask? That no students will be under the age of seventeen may be gathered from Lord Cranbrook's speech; and though no further limit is assigned therein—and none probably is contemplated, for who is too old to learn?—it may reasonably be assumed that a general census of the lecture-rooms would show a strong preponderance of the young. A large proportion, perhaps the majority, will doubtless be girls, who—I speak not disrespectfully of lecturers or pupils—have no more pressing occupation for their happy idleness. But even among the more serious class of students the young must surely preponderate. The ambition and the energy of youth are needed to add the pursuit of culture to the daily struggle for existence; and the students whom this scheme aims at attracting will clearly be those to whom the first needs of existence do not come unlooked for.

It is a question, I cannot but think, whether the study of the Philosophy of the Beautiful will materially assist the objects of the movement as defined by Mr. Jebb. Heretics there are indeed who venture to doubt whether the study of Philosophy, as practised in the Schools of Oxford, is of much value to any class of mind, or that the human intelligence at any stage of its progress is materially benefited by, let us say, a knowledge of the "Amphiboly of the conceptions of the Reflection"; whether it does not rather suggest the notion of angels, ineffectual if not beautiful, vainly beating in the void no luminous wings. There have even been men, not unlearned nor unintelligent, who held that the philosophical is not the most precious part of the heritage bequeathed by Plato to the human race. But these are extreme opinions which I am concerned neither to maintain nor to refute. It is at least no extreme opinion to hold that the study of Philosophy is not one to be lightly taken up, either as the elegant distraction of an idle hour enjoyed alternately with dissertations upon Pre-Raphaelite painters or Victorian poets, or as a pleasant relief from the dry toil of the counting-house or the factory. In one of his essays on Mill's theory of Government, Macaulay comments on a sort of teaching which takes uneducated or ill-educated persons, "puts five or six phrases into their mouths, lends them an odd number of the Westminster Review, and in a month transforms them into philosophers." The recipe is not yet out of date, though the Review may be. But these cannot be the teachers, nor these the pupils whom Mr. Jebb had in his mind when he pleaded the cause of University Extension before Lord Cranbrook.

Yet it is hard to avoid an uneasy suspicion that some such result may follow from its pious labours, if this treatise on the Philosophy of the Beautiful may be taken as representing its general scope and method. I

say not a word against the execution of the book. What its composer designed to do, he has done as comprehensively as the nature of his subject and the limitations of his space allowed him. If he has not exactly attained to the praise given to the learned and judicious Richard Hooker, who "had a most blessed and clear method of demonstrating what he knew to the great advantage of all his pupils," we must remember that the fruits of more than two thousand years' speculation are not easily to be garnered in a little volume of some three hundred pages. My doubt is rather of the wisdom of the design. Aristotle confessed to a difficulty in determining how far it would profit a weaver or a carpenter in the exercise of his art to contemplate the ideal good; and, though of course the explanation may be forthcoming, no man need be ashamed to share the doubts of Aristotle. Will it, for instance, enlarge the mental horizon of the budding provincial Miss to hear that "the voice of beauty comes not to the soul in the form of a categorical imperative"? Will it render the young carpenter's conception of life more fruitful, or the young weaver's patriotism more intelligent, to read that "the sublime dynamic creates the beautiful, the sublime mathematic contains it"? What man or woman, young or old, in any class of life, at any period of their mental development, will be profited one jot or tittle by the information that when they look at a picture, or listen to a piece of music, they are only exercising the æsthetic impulse, and that the æsthetic impulse is only "the subjective concomitant of the normal amount of activity, not directly connected with life-serving function, in the peripheral end-organs of the cerebro-spinal nervous system"? Is this the Philosophy that Milton found divine and charming and musical as Apollo's lute? Can a perpetual feast of such sweets be good for any human digestion? If ever there were an illustration of

the cloud of words which darkens the face of learning it is surely here. I do not wish to exaggerate, and I may be wrong; but I do most strongly hold to the opinion that it would be impossible to compose in the English language a sentence more absolutely unintelligible to the Plain Man than this. Its composer possibly knew what he meant when he penned it, and Professor Knight of course knew when he transcribed it. But will either of them care to quote it as a sample of that "combination of scientific treatment with popularity" and of "simplicity with thoroughness" to which the "remarkable success which has attended University Extension in Britain" is ascribed? This, it should be said, is Mr. Grant Allen's contribution to the *Philosophy of the Beautiful*. Mr. Allen is a novelist, and as he has lately won the prize of a thousand pounds offered for the best novel by the proprietors of a weekly journal known as *Tit-Bits* (which might itself by the title be some University Extension Manual) he must be called a successful one. The *Beautiful* should be a complement of all good fiction; but if Mr. Allen carries his theory of the *Beautiful* into the composition of his novels, they must be very remarkable works. In a chain which stretches from Plato to Mr. Grant Allen there will be many links. The conjunction of the two names, with all the host that intervenes, is ample proof of the judicial and catholic spirit in which Professor Knight has approached his subject. He advocates no theory, but examines all. He sums up the evidence of two thousand years, and presents it to the jury—but to a jury of whom?

By quoting passages detached from their context any form of human wisdom can, it may be said, be made to look foolish. The passages I have quoted have been taken as I found them, as the reader of this treatise will have to take them. Its very form necessitates the detachment of

passages from their context. To students of Philosophy who can themselves supply the context this will be no hardship. But to the others—the blank sheets of paper, whom this Manual is intended to prepare for the study of Philosophy, whom it is intended “to educate rather than to inform,”—how will it be with them? However, to avoid any suspicion of unfair dealing, I will take another passage, in which a complete theory of the Beautiful is presented to the young reader.

Hartmann's theory of æsthetic beauty is expressed in the word *Schein* to which he gives a peculiar meaning. The æsthetic “shine” is not either in outward objects (landscape, air-vibrations, &c.) or in the mind. It is occasioned by outward objects, made by artists or otherwise, and is capable of summoning the “shine” before the mind of all normally constituted people. He talks of eye-shine, ear shine, imagination-shine [and moon-shine?] and in this shine only is beauty present. The subjective phenomenon alone is beautiful. No external reality is essential to it, provided only this æsthetic shine is set up by whatever means. In natural beauty however the shine cannot be dis severed from the reality. A painter sees the shine at once, as something different from the real objects; so may we, if, for example, we look at a landscape with inverted head! This plan, however, does not answer in a room. It is only the subjective phenomenon, however, absolved from reality, that makes an æsthetic relation possible.

The shine does not pretend to be *true* in any sense. We must avoid the expression “phenomenon,” “appearance” in connection with it, as this suggests objective reality, which is quite irrelevant. The shine is not a mental perception, it does not deal with an idea, “the idea of the beautiful”; and no supersensuous idea of the beautiful is at all necessary. In fact the pretensions of transcendental æsthetic have brought the study into disrepute. Shine is not the same as a picture, unless picture be taken in a psychical or intellectual sense; otherwise a picture is a real thing while shine is not. It is also to be distinguished from form.

As a picture stands to the thing pictured, a form stands to substance, so does æsthetic shine stand to the subject. The subject disappears before it; not only do the interests of self disappear, but the very ego itself. The subject disappears from the

subjective side of consciousness, and it emerges again on the objective side. The æsthetic shine is thus a disintegration of the ego, yet it is not an illusion. It is a reality of consciousness. Beauty reveals itself to us in a series of steps, but at the last it remains a mystery, and without mystery there would be no beauty.

Matthew Arnold, combating the harm done to Wordsworth's fame by certain indiscreet disciples who persisted in praising the master's work for its worst qualities—that is, not for its poetry, which is the reality, but for its philosophy, which is the illusion—quotes some dreadful lines prized by the devout Wordsworthian for the scientific system of thought contained in them:—

O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest
wealth
And best protection, this Imperial Realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation on her part to teach
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute to secure,
For all the children whom her soil main-
tains,
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth.

“One can hear them,” he cries, “being quoted at a Social Science Congress; one can call up the whole scene. A great room in one of our dismal provincial towns; dusty air and jaded afternoon daylight; benches full of men with bald heads and women in spectacles; an orator lifting up his face from a manuscript written within and without to declaim these lines of Wordsworth; and in the soul of any poor child of Nature who may have wandered in thither, an unutterable sense of lamentation, and mourning, and woe!” After reading this theory of the Beautiful, with all its wondrous talk about the *æsthetic shine* and the *disintegration of the ego*, one cannot help suspecting that there might be moments when a poor child of Nature might feel almost as much out of place at a University Extension Lecture as at a Social Science Congress.

Let me say it again, my quarrel,

or, for that is a harsh word, my doubt, is not of the wisdom of the book, but of the wisdom of offering it to minds that cannot in the nature of things be more than half trained, and whose training, such as it is, cannot surely have prepared them as yet to derive from these beautiful peradventures the profit that doubtless lurks in their mystic sentences for more matured intellects. Of course all the teaching in this little volume is not of a piece with that I have exhibited. Occasionally one comes upon a piece of plain common sense that to the poor child of Nature at least is as grateful as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. How refreshing, after running one's head against the "peripheral end-organs" of Mr. Allen, or standing on one's head to catch the "aesthetic shine" of the worthy Hartmann (a mode of philosophic research which, as Professor Knight justly warns his pupils, it were unadvisable to practise in a picture-gallery)—how refreshing, I say, after these facts to turn to Cicero's simple definition of beauty as "the apt configuration of body, with a certain delicacy of colour superadded"; or to Mr. Edward Tylor's candid confession of his inability to tell what led the primitive man to think a feather in the nose a beautiful appendage. How wholesome too is this, perhaps the most fruitful truth in the book to be impressed on the minds of the rising generation:

No nation has ever been at the time aware of its own artistic decline. Nay, its critics and art-workers have even sometimes interpreted, what posterity has seen to be a regress, as a forward movement, or as an ascent. This remark applies to national decadence, not only in art, but also in every other direction—in philosophy, in morals, in political life, and in religion.

Here we have Professor Knight himself, and we cannot wish to have him in a better vein. There is a text for a sermon on *Our Noble Selves*! But such periods of refreshment are, alas!

too few in this distracting chase after the eternal and unseizable shadow of the Beautiful.

It used to be made, and perhaps still in certain quarters is made, a reproach against Matthew Arnold that he went about the world preaching what he was pleased to call *culture* as the universal panacea for the failures and shortcomings of our nation. Mr. Frederic Harrison, in an angry moment, declared that "the very silliest cant of the day is the cant about culture." All cant is silly, as well as mischievous. But Arnold never canted about culture, though unfortunately he enabled others to do so. "Culture," Mr. Harrison continued, "is a desirable quality in a critic of new books, and sits well on a professor of *belles lettres*; but as applied to politics, it means simply a turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action. The man of culture is one of the poorest creatures alive." If culture means this, then assuredly Mr. Harrison is right; and though of course true culture does not mean this—as Mr. Harrison must have known when his anger passed; for is he not himself a man of culture?—it may be owned that it will not by itself equip a man for the office of a political teacher, as others than Matthew Arnold have proved. But certainly Mr. Harrison was right when he poured his anathema on the cant about culture. The word has often been very idly and very mischievously used by some who have prated about it and professed to practise it. I will venture to quote what I wrote elsewhere on this subject some little while back:—

The chatter that went on a year or two ago upon the hundred best books was a notable instance of the cant about culture. It was impossible to look at the greater part of those lists, and of the well-meaning people who had drawn them up, without recalling that pithy sentence which Mr. Arnold has somewhere quoted from Bishop Butler, that in general no part of our time is more idly spent than the time spent in reading. Culture, as defined by Mr. Arnold is "to know the best that has been thought

and said in the world"; but this, like most definitions, is but half the truth. A knowledge of the best that has been thought and said in the world can only be acquired by reading; but reading alone will not avail without, as Burke said, "the power of diversifying the matter infinitely in your own mind, and of applying it to every occasion that arises." And culture must be relative. It is not every man who can, like Bacon, take all knowledge for his province. The spectacle of Visto toiling for a taste is much less pitiful than the struggle going on to-day among so many good creatures of both sexes for what they are pleased to call culture. Visto only made himself ridiculous; but these good souls, and especially the women, besides doing that most completely, do themselves also infinite harm. They perplex and unsettle themselves with subjects they cannot understand, and were never born to understand. They fill the vacant space of their heads with a mass of undigested, undiversified reading, which only disables them for the proper conduct of their own concerns. These are the disciples of false culture, and they are unhappily very common in this age of little books. And this false culture will make men the poorest creatures alive in all affairs.

When it is remembered who and what are to be the readers of this little Manual, for whom and what has been designed the system of teaching of which it is a part, what is their age, what has been their education, what will be the life they are being trained for, is there not some fear lest they be found one day to be poor creatures in their affairs? Is there not some fear lest the time they have spent in reading all these speculations on the Beautiful may be found to have been idly spent when the day comes, as it must come to all, for them to take their lives into their own hands? Some two centuries before Burke much the same warning was delivered by a homelier sage against the idea that mere reading by rote was all that was needed to make a wise man. In his essay on Pedantry,—an essay as sound as it is amusing—Montaigne is particularly severe on that sort of teaching which merely fills the memory without

reaching the understanding. "We can say, Cicero says this is, that these were the manners of Plato, and that these are the very words of Aristotle; but what do we say ourselves that is our own? What do we do? What do we judge? A parrot would say as much as that." As usual he borrows a quotation from his favourite Seneca to describe this sort of students: "*Non vite, sed scholæ discimus*; we learn not for our life, but for the school." Or, as he puts it in his own more full-flavoured phrase: "What avails it to have our bellies full of meat, if it be not digested?" Pupils so taught seem, he avers, to be distracted even from common sense.

Note but the plain husbandman or the unwily shoemaker, and you see them, simply and naturally plod on their course, speaking only of what they know, and no further; whereas these letter-puft pedants, because they would fain raise themselves aloft, and with their literal doctrine [mere book-learning] which floateth up and down the superficies of their brain, arm themselves beyond other men, they incessantly intricate and entangle themselves: they utter lofty words and speak golden sentences, but so that another man doth place, fit, and apply them. They are acquainted with Galen, but know not the disease.

And again:

Whosoever shall narrowly look into this kind of people, which far and wide hath spread itself, he shall find (as I have done) that for the most part they neither understand themselves nor others, and that their memory is many times sufficiently full fraught, but their judgment ever hollow and empty.

The teacher, he says elsewhere, who shall instruct the young after this fashion "shall breed but asses laden with books."

Montaigne was not used to mince his words, and Florio was at no great pains to soften them. I would fain end with a gentler teacher. Let me quote once more the object of the University Extension lecturer as defined in Mr. Jebb's words: *To raise the*

whole education of the citizen, to enlarge his mental horizon, to draw out his powers of thought and imagination, to render his patriotism more intelligent, and his conception of life more fruitful.

Will Professor Knight, or any other of the generous and learned gentlemen who are devoting their time and talents to this beneficent end, honestly say that they believe the path to it will be appreciably smoothed for any boy or

girl by reading that "the voice of beauty comes not to the soul in a categorical imperative," or that the love of the beautiful is only "the subjective concomitant of the normal amount of activity, not directly connected with life-serving function, in the peripheral end-organs of the cerebro-spinal nervous system"?

MARK REID.

OUR MILITARY UNREADINESS.

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE REGIMENTAL OFFICER.

THE voice of the military critic has of late been heard in the land, and all who will listen have been told that the British army as an effective fighting machine exists no longer in the United Kingdom. With much that has been written on this subject every regimental officer cannot but most cordially agree. He knows, if any one does, where the shoe pinches. There is not an officer of twenty years' service who is not perfectly well aware that the powers of endurance, the discipline, and the general fitness for war of the soldiers in our home battalions have deteriorated lamentably since he first joined the service. All that has lately been proclaimed abroad as something new is but an echo of the mess-room talk of many years past; and so familiarised has the regimental officer become with the present condition of affairs that its public discussion has almost ceased to interest him. The lamentations so frequently heard ten or fifteen years ago on the part of the older officers seem now to have given place to the callousness of despair, as expressed in the formula but too often heard among infantry officers that, "Anything is better than regimental soldiering at home." A state of things more dangerous than that which such a feeling lays bare can hardly be conceived, implying, as it does, that officers have for some reason almost ceased to realise the responsibilities of their position.

"But what," it will be asked, "are these responsibilities if, as is so often asserted, the United Kingdom is practically safe from invasion so long as our navy holds command of the sea?" Such a question is easily answered. Our home battalions are in present circumstances but the nursery and the

school for the linked battalions abroad; and, just as the man reflects through life the training of his earlier days, so beyond question is it a fact that the soldier is made or marred during the period of instruction which he undergoes as a recruit. Then must be learnt those lessons of unquestioning obedience to his superiors, of implicit faith in and reliance on his officers, of honour and of love for sovereign, country, and regiment which go to make up that true discipline which is the very life of an army. Slackness or want of interest in his daily work, if once allowed to take firm root, can never afterwards be entirely eradicated. And not for the men in the ranks only is the home battalion the training-ground, but here also a large proportion of young officers acquire their first insight into their profession.

When once the fact has been fully grasped that it is on the condition of the battalions at home that the efficiency of our infantry all over the world directly depends, the terrible danger of allowing those battalions to remain in their present condition of unfitness for war becomes at once apparent. That the great majority of them are for all practical purposes most inefficient, no officer of any judgment, who knows what are the demands of modern war, will for one moment attempt to deny. Physically the men who compose them are unable to meet even the very moderate demands made on their endurance during our yearly manœuvres, when, be it remembered, they are not required to carry anything like the weight which would be necessary in war.

Bad as such a state of things undoubtedly is, there is at present a far more terrible fear lurking in the

minds of many officers, and especially of regimental officers. The discipline of our army is certainly not now what it once was. To prove or disprove such an assertion it is absolutely useless to turn, as is so frequently done, to records of punishments, for such records are capable of very varied interpretation. Mere dread of punishment is of all incentives to discipline the most unworthy and perhaps the weakest. In old days, it is true, when, as the Duke of Wellington used to say, the British army was composed of "the very scum of the earth," the cell and the lash played a more important part in maintaining discipline than happily they do now. But with all the brutal punishments of those days there existed other motives of a higher type which were conducive to true discipline in peace and war. Of these the most prominent were the blind confidence in his officers, bred of long association, and the almost too assertive pride of regiment which were such marked features in the long-service soldier. But what is our present position in this respect? The punishments awarded for "crime," as in military parlance all offences against discipline are termed, grow year by year less in number, while in point of severity they are not even to be compared with the penalties for wrong-doing endured by the past generation. That this should be the case would be a matter of congratulation were it certain that the quality of our discipline is as high now as it was then. With the younger, better educated, and more sober class of men who now enlist it is only natural to expect a diminution of "crime" of all sorts. There can, however, be but little doubt that many experienced officers are of opinion that certain offences are not now punished with the severity which they demand. Nor can it be doubted that the other incentives to discipline are not the same power that they once were. *Esprit de corps* is but a shadow of its old self, while no

one will pretend that the county or local feeling, which presumably is intended to take its place, has hitherto proved in any way an efficient substitute. It is, however, when we come to consider the existing relations between officers and their subordinates that the most serious cause for reflection presents itself. At a time when officers and men practically spent their lives in one regiment it was impossible but that they should in course of time gain a more or less intimate knowledge of each other; and with British soldiers mutual knowledge has, thank heaven! ever meant mutual confidence. The regiment was to all their home. But what is our position to-day in this respect? Literally almost before the young soldier has learnt the names of his officers he is shipped off to a hungry linked battalion in some foreign land. The company officers on their part make but little pretence of taking any interest in youths who come to-day and are gone to-morrow. And after all why should they do so? They are not responsible for the training of these youths, that being the sole concern of the adjutant and the serjeant-major. There is probably no human being on this earth more full of keenness and more fit to bear his modicum of responsibility than a healthy English youth fresh from a public school. And yet, if ever a system could be devised to destroy the natural keenness in him and to unfit him for bearing responsibility, that system is ours. Not only does he soon learn by experience that there is but little outlet for his energy in real soldiering, that is in training his men for war and for war only, but his observation teaches him that any great display of zeal on his part will entail more than his share of the necessary, but none the less dull, routine duties of barrack life. He who desires a somewhat more stirring existence will acquire for himself as rapidly as possible a reputation for knowing and caring for no-

thing military, for by this means most surely will be obtained the requisite leisure for the more congenial pursuits of the cricket-ground, the racecourse, or the hunting-field. Our friend, moreover, has the pleasurable feeling that, no matter how much he may neglect his duty, his chances of promotion in due course are as certain as are those of his less observant comrade, who vainly imagines that his daily presence at the door of the orderly-room is a benefit either to himself or to the men whom he aspires to influence. Exaggerated as such a picture may appear, it is unfortunately but too faithful a description of our present system of regimental administration in many infantry battalions. Here if anywhere will be found the cause of our present unreadiness for war, and of the lack of interest in his profession which the regimental officer is so freely abused for displaying.

In the officers and men of our line battalions England possesses to-day a raw material absolutely unequalled both for physique and individual intelligence in the armies of the Continent. This statement is indeed no mere ignorant blast of insular prejudice. It is a deliberate and honest opinion based on personal observation in favourable circumstances of both the French and the German armies; and it is a statement which may confidently be submitted to the judgment of all who have had opportunities of ascertaining what is the raw material of those armies. And yet those armies achieve in a few months results of physical and intellectual efficiency which appear almost incredible to us. What then is the cause?

The answer to this question is to be found in the words of a young Prussian regimental officer, who, after the war of 1866, ventured to raise his voice against an antiquated system of tactics which the traditions of his service had rendered sacred in the eyes of the older officers. "The captain commanding a company," writes Captain May in his *Tactical Retro-*

spect, "is the only officer between whom and the soldier a personal relation exists in peace time. He knows every individual soldier in the most intimate manner, and the soldier on his part is aware that his captain so knows him. It is upon this relation that the uncommon influence rests which he, above all other officers, has over the individual soldier, as well as over the whole company. The soldier sees his nearest home in his company, and he has, under all circumstances, a decided feeling for his captain, even though it be one of hatred. In most cases, however, it is a feeling of love, confidence, and respect . . . They [*i.e.*, the captain and his subordinate] become accustomed to one another, have their fits of ill-temper at times on both sides; but when at length the hour comes that they are finally to part, there is an earnest feeling of sorrow which cannot be suppressed.

. . . The beautiful relation between the soldier and his captain is a cornerstone of our army, and not one of the least firm ones. The highest reward which the soldier can obtain during his service springs from his captain, namely the confidence of his company leader; and he, on his part, will find in the attachment of his subordinate the most precious reward which will fall to him in his lifetime."

In these words breathes the spirit which has made the German army what it is to-day—that spirit which Scharnhorst and the other great founders of the modern military system foresaw so plainly must exist, unless a short-service army was to become an empty delusion. The means employed to bring about this intimate relation between officers and men may be summed up in the one word *responsibility*.

The German captain has about fifty recruits handed over to him in November, and in some four months from that time he knows that they must have attained to a certain degree of efficiency, and that a high one, before they can be passed as trained

soldiers. The method of bringing them to this pitch of excellence is left entirely to the discretion of the individual officer.

The inspection of recruits is, in the German army, a great function, and often takes place in the presence of the general officer commanding the brigade, the division, or even the army-corps. On the results of this inspection the captain knows that his chances of promotion directly depend; or rather, he is fully aware that an unsatisfactory inspection in two or three successive years would of a certainty mean the loss of his commission. He further knows that before the following autumn, when the manœuvres take place, the whole of his company, about 140 strong, must be fit to march anywhere and do anything. It is this very real responsibility of the company officer which makes the German and the French armies the splendid fighting machines which they are, and there is absolutely no reason whatever why our home army should not be in every respect as efficient as they are. Let it once be laid down as a hard-and-fast rule that a smaller number than say fifty recruits shall never be sent from the depot to the home battalion; let them be posted entirely to one company; let some standard of efficiency, the higher the better, in drill, field-exercises, gymnastics, musketry, marching under conditions of war, the history of the country and of the regiment, be laid down by regulation as attainable in a given time; above all, let the captain be held personally responsible that this standard is attained, and it may confidently be predicted that the cry of short service having ruined our army will be heard no more. If, moreover, besides putting the responsibility for the training of his men on the cap-

tain, his disciplinary powers be widely extended, so that he, instead of the battalion commander as at present, shall become in all ordinary circumstances the dispenser of justice to his men, it is obvious that the relations between them must in future be of a more intimate character than in the past.

For twenty years we have been striving after the impossible. A regimental system centralised in a commanding officer, an adjutant, and a serjeant-major, however excellent it may have been when recruits were few, is in present circumstances a hopeless anachronism.

The energy which the company officer throws into his work during the too brief period of company training, when for a few weeks he feels that he is really preparing his men for war, is evidence of what might be expected were this the case throughout the year.

It is not asked that extra burdens, such as pay and clothing accounts, which can hardly be said to bring him nearer to his men, should be cast on his shoulders, for a nation such as England can well afford that such duties should be undertaken by a special staff. But it is imperatively demanded by the conditions of a short-service army that every officer shall from the day of joining feel that the discipline and the war-training of the men under him is his one essential duty—a duty which he must fulfil if he is to continue to serve Her Majesty. Thus and thus only can the discipline and the efficiency of the British army be made what they once were. Thus and thus only will Englishmen be once more in a position to ask the question so proudly put by Sir Charles Napier:—"How is it possible to defeat British troops?"

THE VILLAGE LEGACY.

"THE case of Mussumât¹ Nuttia being without heirs," droned the Court-Inspector.

"Bring her in."

"She is already in the Presence. If the Protector of the Poor will rise somewhat,—at the other side of the table, *Huzoor!*—beside the yellow-trouserred legs of the guardian of peace,—that is Mussumât Nuttia."

A child some three years of age, with a string of big blue beads round her neck,—a child who had evidently had a very satisfying meal, and who was even now preserving its contour by half-a-yard of sugar-cane, stared gravely back at the Assistant Magistrate's grave face.

"She has no heirs of any kind?" he asked.

"None, *Huzoor!* Her mother was of the Harni tribe, working harvests in Bhâmaniwallah-khurd. There the misfortune of being eaten by a snake came upon her by the grace of God. Mussumât Nuttia therefore remains,—"

"Oh, Guardian of the Poor!" said two voices in unison, as two tall bearded figures swathed in whitish-brown draperies pressed a step forward with out-stretched petitioning hands. They had been awaiting this crisis all day long, with that mixture of tenacity and indifference which is seen on most faces in an Indian court.

"Give her in charge of the headmen of the village; they are responsible."

"Shelter of the world! 'tis falsely represented. The woman was a vagrant, a loose walker, a—"

"Is the order written? Then bring the next case."

¹ A title of courtesy equivalent to our *mistress*.

One flourish of a pen, and Mussumât Nuttia became a village-legacy; the only immediate result being that having sucked one end of her sugar-cane dry, she began methodically on the other. Half-an-hour afterwards, mounted on a white pony, with pink eyes and nose and a dyed pink tail to match, she was on her way back to the cluster of reed huts dignified by the name of Bhâmaniwallah-khurd, or Little Bhâmaniwallah. Big Bhâmaniwallah lay a full mile to the northward, secured against midsummer floods by the high bank which stretched like a mud wall right across the Punjab plain, from the skirts of the hills to the great meeting of the five waters at Mittankote. But Little Bhâmaniwallah lay in the lap of the river, and so Bahâdur, and Boota, and Jodha, and all the grave big-bearded Dogas who fed their herds of cattle on the low ground and speculated in the cultivation of sand-banks, lived with their loins girded ready to shift house with the shifting of the river. That was why the huts were made of reeds; that was why the women of the village clanked about in solid silver jewellery, thus turning their persons into a secure savings-bank.

Mussumât Jewun, Bahâdur the headman's wife, wore bracelets like manacles, and a perfect yoke of a necklet, as she patted out the dough cakes and expostulated shrilly at the introduction of a new mouth into the family, when Nuttia, fast asleep, was lifted from the pony and put down in the warm sand by the door.

"She belongs to the village," replied the elders wagging their beards. "God knows what my Lords desire with the Harni brat,

but if they ask for her, she must be forthcoming; ay! and fat. They like people to grow fat, even in their jail-*khana*s."

So Nuttia grew fat; she would have grown fat even had the fear of my Lords not been before the simple villagers' eyes, for despite her tender years she was eminently fitted to take care of herself. She had an instinct as to the houses where good things were being prepared, and her chubby little hand, imperiously stretched out for a portion was seldom sent away empty. Indeed, to tell the sober truth, Nuttia was not to be gainsaid as to her own hunger. "My stomach is bigger than *that*, grandmother!" she would say confidently if the alms appeared to her inadequate, and neither cuffs nor neglect altered her conviction. She never cried, and the little fat hand silently demanding more, came back again and again after every rebuff till she felt herself in a condition to seek some warm sunny corner, and curl round to sleep. She lived, for the most part, with the yelping, slouching, village dogs, following them, as the nights grew chill, to the smouldering brick-kilns, where she fed the little dust-coloured puppies with anything above, or beneath, her own appetite.

As she outgrew childhood's vestment of curves and dimples, some one gave her an old rag of a petticoat. Perhaps the acquisition of clothes followed, as in ancient days, a fall from grace; certain it was that Nuttia in a garment was a far less estimable member of society than Nuttia without one. To begin with, it afforded opportunity for the display of many mortal sins. Vainglory in her own appearance, deceit in attempting to palm the solitary prize off on the world as a various and complete wardrobe, and dishonesty flagrant and unabashed; for once provided with a convenient receptacle for acquired trifles Nuttia took to stealing as a naturally as a puppy steals bones.

Then, once having recognised the pleasures of possession, she fought furiously against any infringement of her rights. A boy twice her size went yelling home to his parents on her first resort to brute force consequent on the discovery of a potsherd tied to her favourite puppy's tail. This victory proving unfortunate for the peace of the village, the head-men awoke to the necessity for training up their Legacy in the paths of virtue. So persistent pummelling was resorted to with the happiest effect. Nuttia stole and fought no more; she retired with dignity from a society which failed to appreciate her, and took to the wilderness instead. At earliest dawn, after her begging-round was over, she would wander out from the thorn-enclosures to the world; a kaleidoscope world where fields ripened golden crops one year, and the next brought the red brown river wrinkling and dimpling in swift current; where big, brand-new continents rose up before eager eyes, and clothed themselves in green herbs and creeping things innumerable, going no further however in the scale of creation, except when the pelicans hunched themselves together to doze away digestion, or a snub-nosed alligator took a slimy snooze on the extreme edge. If you wished to watch the birds, or the palm-squirrels, or the jerboa rats, you had to face northwards and skirt the high bank. So much of Dame Nature's ways, and a vast deal more, Mussumât Nuttia learnt ere the setting sun and hunger drove her back to the brick-kilns, and the never failing meal of scraps,—never failing, because the Lords of the Universe liked people to be fat, and the head-men were responsible for their Legacy's condition.

So when an Assistant Magistrate,—indefinite because of the constant changes which apparently form part of Western policy,—included the Bhāmaniwāllahs in his winter tour of inspection, a *punchaigut*, or Council of Five, decided that it was the duty of

the village to provide Nuttia with a veil, in case she should be haled to the Presence; and two yards of Manchester muslin were purchased from the reserve funds of the village, and handed over to the child with many wise saws on the general advisability of decency. Nuttia's delight for the first five minutes was exhilarating, and sent the head-men back to other duties with a glow of self-satisfaction on their solemn faces. Then she folded the veil up quite square, sat down on it, and meditated on the various uses to which it could be put.

The result may be told briefly. Two days afterwards the Assistant Magistrate, being a keen sportsman, was crawling on his stomach to a certain long low pool much frequented by teal and mallard. In the rear, gleaming white through the caper bushes, showed the usual cloud of witnesses filled with patient amazement at this unnecessary display of energy; yet for all that counting shrewdly on the good temper likely to result from good sport. So much so, that the sudden uprising into bad language of the *Huzoor* sent them forward prodigal of apology; but the sight that met their eyes dried up the fountain of excuse. Nuttia, stark naked, stood knee-deep in the very centre of the pool, catching small fry with a bag-net ingeniously constructed out of the Manchester veil.

The *punchaiyut* sat again to agree that a child who could not only destroy the sport of the Guardian of the Poor, but could also drag the village honour through the mud, despite munificent inducements toward decency, must be possessed of a devil. So Nuttia was solemnly censured with red pepper and turmeric, until her yells and struggles were deemed sufficient to denote a casting out of the evil spirit. It is not in the slow-brained, calm-hearted peasant of India to be unkind to children, and so, when the function was over, Mussumât Jewun and the other deep-chested, shrill-voiced women comforted the victim with sweetmeats

and the assurance that she would be ever so much better behaved in future.

Nuttia eyed them suspiciously, but ate her sweetmeats. This incident did not increase her confidence in humanity; on the other hand, the attitude of the brute creation was a sore disappointment to her. She might have had a heart instinct with greed of capture and sudden death, instead of that dim desire of companionship, for all the notice taken by the birds, and the squirrels, and the rats, of her outstretched handful of crumbs. She would sit for long hours, silent as a little bronze image set in the sunshiny sand; then in a rage, she would fling the crumbs at the timid creatures, and go home to the dogs and the buffaloes. They at least were not afraid of her; but then they were afraid of nobody, and Nuttia wanted something of her very own.

One day she found it. It was only an old bed-leg, but to the eye of faith an incarnation. For the leg of an Indian bed is not unlike a huge ninepin, and even a Western imagination can detect the embryo likeness between a ninepin and the human form divine. Man has a head, so has a ninepin; and if humanity is to wear petticoats one solid leg is quite as good as two; nay better, since it stands more firmly. Arms were of course wanting, but the holes ready cut in the oval centre for the insertion of the bed-frame formed admirable sockets for two straight pieces of bamboo. At this stage Nuttia's treasure presented the appearance of a sign-post; but the passion of creation was on the child, and a few hours afterwards something comically, yet pitifully, like the Legacy herself stared back at her from that humble studio among the dirt-heaps, — a shag of goat's hair glued on with prickly pear-juice, two lovely black eyes drawn with Mussumât Jewun's *khol* pencil, a few blue beads, a scanty petticoat and veil filched from the child's own garments.

Nuttia, inspired by the recollection of a tinsel-decorated bride in Big Bhāmaniwallah, called her creature Sirdar Begum on the spot. Then she hid her away in a tussock of tiger-grass beyond the thorn enclosures, and strove to go her evening rounds as though nothing had happened. Yet it was as if an angel from heaven had stepped down to take her by the hand. Henceforward she was never to be alone. All through the silent sunny days, as she watched the big black buffaloes grazing on the muddy flats—for Nuttia was advanced to the dignity of a herd-girl by this time—Sirdar Begum was with her as guide, counsellor, and friend. Whether the doll fared best with a heart's whole devotion poured out on her wooden head, or whether Nuttia's part in giving was more blessed, need not be considered; the result to both being a steady grin on a broad round face. But there was another result also; Nuttia began to develop a taste for pure virtue. Perhaps it was the necessity of posing before Sirdar Begum as infallible, joined to the desire of keeping that young person's conduct up to heroic pitch, which caused the sudden rise in principle. At all events the Legacy's cattle became renowned as steady milkers, and the amount of butter she managed to twirl out of the sour curds satisfied even Mussumât Jewun's demands; whereupon the other herds looked at her askance, and muttered an Indian equivalent of seven devils. Then the necessity for amusing the doll led Nuttia into lingering round the little knots of storytellers who sat far on into the night, discoursing of *jins* and *ghouls*, of faithful lovers, virtuous maidens, and the beauties of holiness. Down on the edge of the big stream, with the water sliding by, Nuttia rehearsed all these wonders to her adored bed-leg until, falling in love with righteousness, she took to telling the truth.

It was a fatal mistake in a cattle-lifting district, and Bhāmaniwallah-

khurd lay in the very centre of that maze of tamarisk jungle, quicksand, and stream, which forms the cattle-thief's best refuge. So Bahādur, and Jodha, and Boota, together with many another honest man made a steady income by levying black-mail on those who sought safety within their boundaries; and this without in any way endangering their own reputations. All that had to be done was to obliterate strange tracks by sending their own droves in the right direction, and thereafter to keep silence. And every baby in both Bhāmaniwallahs knew that hoof-prints were not a legitimate subject for conversation; all save Nuttia, and she—as luck would have it—was a herd-girl! They tried beating this sixth sense into her, but it was no use, and so whenever the silver-fringed turban, white cotton gloves, and clanking sword of the native Inspector of Police were expected in the village, they used to send the Legacy away to the back of beyond,—right away to the Luckimpura island maybe, to reach which she had to hold on to the biggest buffalo's tail, and so, with Sirdar Begum tied securely to its horns and her own little black head bobbing up and down in its wake, the trio would cross the narrow stream and spread themselves out to dry on the hot sand. Nuttia took a great fancy to the island, and many a time when she might have driven the herds to nearer pastures, preferred the long low stretches of Luckimpura where a flush of green lingered even in the droughts of April.

But even there on one very hot day scarcely a blade was to be found, and Nuttia, careful of her beasts and noting the lowness of the river, gathered them round her with the herdsman's cry and drove them to the further brink intending to take them across to a smaller island beyond. To her surprise they stood knee deep in the water immovable, impassive, noses in air, with long curled horns lying on their necks.

The Legacy shaded her eyes to see more clearly. Nothing was to be seen but the swift shallow stream, the level sand, and gleams of water stretching away to the horizon. Something had frightened them—but what? She gave up the puzzle, and with Sirdar Begum bolt upright before her sat on a snag, dangling her feet over the stream for the sake of the cool air which seemed to rise from the river.

The buffaloes roamed restlessly about, disturbed doubtless by the clouds of flies. The sun beat down ineffectually on the doll's fuzzy head, but it pierced Nuttia's thick pate making her nod drowsily. Her voice recounting the thrilling adventures of brave Bhopalutchi died away into a sigh of sleep. So there was nothing left but the doll's wide unwinking eyes to keep watch over the world.

What was that? Something cold, icy-cold! Nuttia woke with a start. One brown heel had touched the water; she looked down at it, then swiftly around her. The buffaloes huddled by the ford had ceased to graze, and a quiver of light greeted her glance at the purple horizon. She sprang to her feet and breaking off a root from the snag, held it to the dimpling water. The next instant a scared face looked at the horizon once more. The river was rising fast, rising as she had never seen it rise before. Yet in past years she had witnessed many a flood; floods that had swept away much of the arable land and driven the villagers to till new soil thrown up nearer the high bank. Ay! and driven many of them to seek new homes beside the new fields, until Bhāmaniwallah-khurd had dwindled away to a few houses, a very few, and these on that hot April day deserted for the most part, since all the able-bodied men and women were away at the harvest. Even the herds had driven their cattle northwards, hoping to come in for some of the lively bustle of the fields. There were only Nuttia on the Luckimpura

island and Mussumât Jewun, with her new baby and the old hag who nursed her, in the reed huts. All this came to the girl's memory as the long low cry of the herd rose on the hot air, and with Sirdar Begum close clasped in her veil she drove the big buffalo Moti into the stream. How cold the water was; cold as the snows from which it came! The Legacy had not lived in the lap of the river for so long without learning somewhat of its ways. She knew of the frost-bound sources whence it flowed, and of the disastrous floods which follow beneath a cloudless sky, on unusual heat or unusual rain in those mountain fastnesses. The coming storm, whose arch of cloud, shimmering with sheet-lightning, had crept beyond the line of purple haze, was nothing; that was not the nightmare of the river-folk.

She stood for a moment when dry land was reached, hesitating whether to strike straight for the high bank or make for the village lying a mile distant. Some vague instinct of showing Sirdar Begum she was not afraid, made her choose the latter course, though most of the herd refused to follow her decision and broke away. She collected her few remaining favourites, and with cheerful cries plunged into the tamarisk jungle. Here, shut out from sight, save of the yielding bushes, her thoughts went far afield. What if the old *nullah* between the reed huts and the rising ground were to fill? What if the low levels between that rising ground and the high bank were to flood? And every one beyond in the yellow corn, except Mai Jewun and people who did not count,—babies, and old women, and the crippled girl in the far hut! Only herself and Sirdar Begum to be brave, for Mai Jewun was sick.

"Wake up! Wake up! Mai Jewun! the floods are out!" broke in on the new-born baby's wail as Nuttia's broad scared face shut out the sunlight from the door.

"Go away, unlucky daughter of a bad mother," grumbled Jewun drow-

sily. "Dost wish to cast thy evil eye on my heart's delight? Go, I say."

"Yea! go!" grumbled the old nurse cracking her fingers. "Sure some devil possesseth thee to tell truth or lies at thy own pleasure."

But the crippled girl spinning in the far hut had heard the flying feet, caught the excited cry, and now, crawling on her knees to the door threw up her hands and shrieked aloud. The water stood ankle-deep among the tamarisk roots, and from its still pool tiny tongues licked their way along the dry sand.

"The flood! the flood!" The un-availing cry rang out as the women huddled together helplessly.

"Mai Jewun! there is time," came the Legacy's eager voice. "Put the baby down, and help. I saw them do it at Luckimpura that time they took the cattle over the deep stream, and Bahádur beat me for seeing it. Quick! quick!"

Simple enough, yet in its very simplicity lay their only chance of escape. A string-woven bed buoyed up with the bundles of reeds cut ready for re-thatching, and on this frail raft four people—nay five! for first of all with jealous care Nuttia placed her beloved Sirdar Begum in safety, wrapping her up in the clothes she discarded in favour of free nakedness.

Quick! Quick! if the rising ground is to be gained and the levels beyond forded ere the water is too deep! Moti and a companion yoked by plough-ropes to the bed, wade knee-deep, hock-deep, into the stream, and now with the old, cheerful cry Nuttia, clinging to their tails and so guiding them, urges the beasts deeper still. The stream swirls past holding them with it, though they breast it bravely. A log, long stranded in some shallow, dances past, shaving the raft by an inch. Then an alligator, swept from its moorings and casting eyes on Nuttia's brown legs, makes the beasts plunge madly. A rope breaks,—the churned water sweeps over the women,—the

end is near,—when another frantic struggle leaves Moti alone to her task. The high childish voice calling on her favourite's courage rises again and again; but the others, cowed into silence, clutch together with hid faces, till a fresh plunge loosens their tongues once more. It is Moti finding foothold, and they are safe—so far.

"Quick! Mai Jewun," cries Nuttia, as her companions stand looking fearfully over the waste of shallows before them. She knows from the narrowness of the ridge they have reached that time is precious. "We must wade while we can, saving Moti for the streams. Take up the baby, and I—"

Her hands, busy on the bed, stilled themselves,—her face grew gray,—she turned on them like a fury. "Sirdar Begum! I put her there—where is Sirdar Begum?"

"That bed-leg!" shrilled the mother, tucking up her petticoats for greater freedom. "There was no room, and Heart's Delight was cold. Bah! wood floats."

"*Hull-lal-lal-a lalla la!*" The herdsman's cry was the only answer. Moti has faced the flood again, but this time with a light load, for the baby nestling amid Nuttia's clothes is the only occupant of the frail raft.

"My son! My son! Light of mine eyes! Core of my heart! Come back! Come back!"

But the little black head drifting down stream behind the big one never turned from its set purpose. Wood floated, and so might babies. Why not?

Why not, indeed! But as a matter of fact Mai Jewun was right. A dilapidated bed-leg was picked up on a sandbank miles away when the floods subsided; and Moti joined the herd next day to chew the cud of her reflections contentedly. But the Village Legacy and Heart's Delight remained somewhere seeking for something. That something doubtless which had turned the bed-leg into Sirdar Begum.

ROMANCE AND YOUTH.

A YEAR or two ago M. Ferdinand Brunetière, the austere literary critic of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, delivered a lecture at the Odéon Theatre upon Molière's *L'Ecole des Femmes*. According to him, so M. Lemaitre reported, the comedy turned upon the question of age. Agnes is sixteen; Arnolphe confesses to forty-two. That in itself is enough in the play to make Arnolphe not only ridiculous but odious from beginning to end. His successful rival Horace is twenty. He has nothing but youth to recommend him; nor is anything more needed. He and Agnes have all the sympathy of author and audience. And quite right too! cries this austere M. Brunetière; it is a natural and sacred law. In sympathising with Agnes and Horace, the heart is sympathising with nature and instinct.

Molière perhaps does not make the play turn quite so nakedly on the contrast of age as the moral requires. There may not be much in Horace's favour besides his youth; but there is a good deal more than his forty-two years to be set to the discredit of Arnolphe. He is a system-monger and an egotist. Now the egotist, according to Mr. Meredith, is the chosen sport of the comic spirit; while woman (bless her!) was created to be the bane of system and the despair of the system-monger. When a mature bachelor like Arnolphe, in self-conscious dread of becoming as one of the horned herd of husbands about him, captures a babe in long clothes and has her mewed up and artificially trained to be a helpmeet for his special lordship, then the imps of mischief gather in a circle on their haunches to wait and watch for the catastrophe. And if the wretched man, after dwarfing the girl's nature and bounding her horizon,

demands love on the score of gratitude, the angels of heaven join in the applause over his discomfiture. Arnolphe's whole conduct was unfair and ignoble, and the heart of the natural man rejoices to see his prey escape him.

Still, whether or not the comedy was exclusively framed to point this moral, the moral is unquestionably there. Arnolphe's forty-two years count heavily against him. Literature in the mouths of the dramatist and the critic is definitely enough on the side of youth against middle age. Nor could spokesmen be selected for literature less open to suspicion of sentimental bias. As a critic M. Brunetière has been reproached with being too much of a schoolmaster and too little of a lover. And as for Molière, he is the incarnation of that spirit of comedy which is the arch foe of sentimentalism.

So much for the doctrine of literature; now for the teaching of life. Shift the scene from the French stage to the Bow Street Police-Court. A defendant, aged twenty-one, described as a pianoforte-tuner, is charged with being drunk and disorderly and with assaulting the police. The police, it appeared, had interfered to protect a woman, whom prisoner was threatening. *Magistrate*. "Who was the woman?" *Prisoner*. "My wife, your worship." *Magistrate*. "Your wife! why you have the appearance of a boy. Is your wife here?" She was. A little woman stepped forward and said she was prisoner's wife. She was nineteen. They had been married twelve months. Then the scandalised magistrate delivered his soul. "There is no place," he exclaimed, "where so much misery is seen as at the police-court. There is no place to see so

plainly how human misery is produced by human folly,—not by bad laws but by human folly. A boy and girl, just beyond the age when they ought to be whipped, go and get married!"

The age when they ought to be whipped! Shades of Romeo and Juliet! You see, instead of applauding a natural and sacred law M. Brunetière ought to have laid Horace and Agnes across his knee, and imagined for a moment he held under his admonitory palm the prostrate form of M. Zola. It is painful to think what would have been the worthy magistrate's feelings could the precocious babes of Verona have been dragged before his judgment-seat. Indeed if Romeo and Juliet could be translated with their ages unchanged from the poetry of Shakespeare into the prose of modern London life, the stringency of our legislation would make it awkward for the lover of a lady of such tender years. Happily those immortal types of youth and romance, of passionate and tragic love, were not within the jurisdiction. They were Italian, Italians of the Renaissance; and Italians have a large license in these matters. It is the naughty sun, as Byron explains, and the naughtier moon. Sun and race make a deal of difference. Readers of this magazine will remember the Indian girl in Mr. Kipling's beautiful story, *Without Benefit of Clergy*, and her rebellious jealousy of the protracted youth of the "white *mem-log*," her rivals.

Perhaps the sun of Italy is indirectly answerable for the tender age of the lovers and their lasses in much of English poetry and romance. Our poets and romancers were so long under the influence of Italy and the Renaissance. From the time that Chaucer transferred his allegiance from French to Italian models, down till the prestige of the *grand siècle* and Charles II.'s connection with the court of Louis XIV. reimposed a French model, Italy set our literary fashion. The un-English horrors of the tragedy

of Webster and the like are but a reflection of the Italy of the Sforzas and Borgias. Boccaccio and Bandello were our models for story-telling. With the form of the sonnet we imported from Italy the spirit and features of Italian sonneteering. Italian Juliets were imported into English poetry and romance without being made to pay the duty of added years to a northern climate. What in Italy had been nature became in England a piece of literary convention. The Elizabethan sonneteer, if he was not chanting the mature divinity of the Virgin Queen, would proclaim his devotion to some lady-love of traditional immaturity. At Juliet's age, the English miss is apt, as Byron brutally said, to smell of bread and butter. No sober Briton nowadays toasts the maiden of blushing fifteen,—at least not within ear-shot of the police. Charles Surface and his friends were not a particularly sober crew; but in these days Joseph Surface would belong to a Vigilance Society and there might be the devil to pay. It is absolutely incomprehensible how Robert Browning, of all men in the world, should have come to make Mildred Tresham only fourteen years of age when she brought the blot on the 'scutcheon. Dr. Furnivall really should have seen to this. Evelyn Hope was sixteen years old when she died, and the man of forty-eight who loved her, confessed that it was not "her time to love," and that only somewhere in the seventh heaven could he look for any return.

It is true that to redress the balance romance has some mature heroines to set in the opposite scale. To begin with, there is Helen of Troy herself, the arch-heroine of romance. Her love affairs began early enough no doubt, early enough to satisfy Mr. Browning. She was a mere child when Theseus ran away with her. But by a shameless statistical enquiry, by reckoning up the episodes of her youth, and by comparing the date of the Argonautic expedition, in which her brothers took part, with the date

of the Trojan war, the unconscionable Bayle proved to his own ungentlemanly satisfaction that Helen was fifty, more or less, when Paris carried her off in triumph to Troy. Well, then the war lasted ten years; and at the end of it, not only was Menelaus legitimately proud to get her back again, but her beauty was so potent still that Priam forgot and forgave in his pride of it all the woes it had brought on him and his, and paid his tribute of kingly courtesy to her unabdicating grace of womanhood. Nay, ten years later again, when Telemachus visited the Spartan court in quest of news of his many-wiled and much-wanted father, Helen was a fine woman still, though at that time, by Bayle's iniquitous calculations, no less than seventy years of age. No doubt her race and lineage must be borne in mind. There is an elderly aristocratic couple in one of Disraeli's novels, or in one of the parodies of his novels—it is difficult sometimes to remember with Disraeli which is text and which is parody—who might have been taken, so pure was their blood and so perfect their breeding, for their eldest son and daughter's eldest son and daughter. Helen's lineage was more than aristocratic; it was divine. Daughter of Zeus and Leda, sister of Castor and Pollux, she had in her veins the eternal ichor of the gods. That of course made a difference. Indeed Bayle takes credit for the moderation of his estimate, and hints that some would make her out to be at least a hundred. But why do I linger over the ungallant gossip of this dictionary-making sceptic? Was it worthy of a Frenchman to canvass the age of the liege-lady of all lovers of romance? Was it worthy of the caution of a scientific sceptic to clutch at the conjectural chronology of mythological fancy?

If you listen to some of the gossips by the way, you would believe that Iphigenia was not Agamemnon's daughter, but the daughter of Helen and Theseus. That would make Helen

under thirty (would it not?) when she eloped with Paris. It adds fresh cruelty to the curse that blasted Iphigenia's youth, to think that it was her own mother that was the cause. But she would not be the last daughter who has been sacrificed to a mother's flirtation.

If Helen had a grown-up daughter when her face was the fate of nations, Penelope had a grown-up son when the stress of rivalry for her hand was at its keenest. The suitors very likely had set their hearts at least as much upon the estate as on the person of this paragon of prehistoric grass-widowhood. That is what cynicism would suggest, and there was not a little in the conduct of the suitors to give colour to the suggestion. Yet Homer hardly gives us to understand that Penelope was past the prime of her beauty. Nor did scandal spare even her name. The good Homer gave no countenance to it, or it would have put a very distressing complexion on the pretty story of the woven and unwoven web. One version of the birth of Pan, remember, was that he was born of Penelope in her lord's absence, and that no single suitor could claim the whole credit of the paternity.

Pass from romance of legend to romance of history. The wedded names of Antony and Cleopatra remain hardly less than Tristram and Iseult the very symbol of love's lordship. Now Cleopatra was twenty-one when first she met "broad-fronted Caesar," and was twenty-five before the thoughtful knife of Brutus cut the *liaison* short. Yet these were the green and salad days whereof Shakespeare makes her speak so scornfully. When she captivated Mark Antony she was twenty-eight, and she held him her slave for eleven whole years; so that when "by the aspick's bite" she "died a queen," absolute queen of him still soul and sense, she was of the unromantic age of thirty-nine. I named Iseult. A learned friend of mine has unearthed her epitaph from

an old Italian book, whereby it appears she was thirty-one at the time when she fell stricken to death on Tristram's corpse.

So, you see, it was no such revolutionary innovation, no such Copernican discovery for romance, when Balzac made his much vaunted "woman of thirty" the centre of the system of his human comedy. The usually unsympathetic Ste. Beuve might trumpet the achievement, and talk of these women of thirty waiting dumb and expectant for their discoverer, and of the electric flash when they met. But really she is an old friend in romance, this woman of thirty! Nor did Charles de Bernard do any new thing when he bettered his master and gave the world his "woman of forty." Nor did Thackeray, when, by one of the boldest strokes in fiction, he made Harry Esmond turn from Beatrix to her mother Lady Castlewood. Diane de Poitiers was forty-eight when Henry II. of France was twenty-nine. The young King surrendered at discretion to his enchantress, and gave her his country, himself, ay and his queen too, to do what she would with. She held her sway without check or wane to the end. She was seventy when Brantôme saw her, and she was, he says, as fair and fresh and lovable as at thirty. Posterity, said Paul de St. Victor prettily, still looks at Diane through the dazzled eyes of Henry; and we picture her always, in spite of her really venerable age, as the artists of the Renaissance immortalised her, in the form of Jean Goujon's goddesses or Cellini's nymph.

Then there is the famous case of Ninon de l'Enclos. If Ninon was only thirty when she carried off captive Madame de Sévigné's husband, she was full fifty-five when a generation later she took captive the same Madame de Sévigné's son. And so far as the willingness of the spirit went, she would no doubt have carried her conquests into the third generation, but that the Marquis de Grignan, Madame de Sévigné's grandson, was barely

fifteen when she was seventy—the three-score years and ten assigned by the preacher as the limits of life, not of love. Like Emma Bovary, Ninon kept her last kiss for the cross; she devoted to religion the last two or three of the eighty-nine years allotted to her as the span of her earthly pilgrimage.

I have been led far afield by my dream of fair women,—even the census-taker has his dreams, though it is his invidious duty to ask the ladies' ages. I was thinking rather of the heroes than of the heroines of romance when I started with the contrast between the views of the police-magistrate and the literary critic. As to the age of romance for girls there is no great discrepancy between the ideas expressed in literature and those entertained in life. Our Psyches are still girls, if our Cupids begin to wax fat and forty. Neither the tragic childhood of Mildred Tresham nor the triumphant old age of Ninon de l'Enclos is normal in life or books. Nor, in spite of Ste. Beuve and the enthusiasm of later and lesser critics, is Balzac's woman of thirty a normal subject of romance. She was bred partly of Balzac's idiosyncrasy, partly of his pride of originality, partly of artificial social conditions. The baby's grandmother in Mrs. Walford's amusing novel was not regarded by her neighbours as a normal case, least of all by the baby's very conventional parents. It is significant, as M. Lemaitre has observed, that Molière's Agnes is still made up on the modern stage to look sixteen or thereabouts; whereas the actor who plays Arnolphe to produce the proper effect is bound to add, and in fact always does add, a very considerable number of years to the forty-two Molière gave him. To a modern audience a prospective husband of forty-two would appear at least as natural as a prospective husband of twenty. And if in life the man of forty-two is not such a terror to the girls as he was in the old comedy, so neither is the youth of

twenty such a hero. What strikes one in the old-fashioned stories is the extraordinary capacities of the hero of twenty. There is hardly anything he cannot do. In peace and war, in policy and passion, he is equal to all emergencies. In reality the youth of twenty is not of much account. The girls snub him; his college gates him; nobody but his tailor trusts him much. The pianoforte-tuner was twenty-one, and a gentleman with judicial experiences of life and humanity regards him as a boy just beyond the age when he ought to be whipped. The young Duke of Orleans was of the full heroic age of twenty-one when he sought to take his place in the ranks and was put in prison for his pains; and whether for sympathy or sarcasm the world was agreed in treating his exploit as the prank of a school-boy. At the Bar men are still rising juniors with grey hair or bald head. In politics Mr. Chamberlain is a young man, Mr. Balfour is almost a boy, Mr. Curzon is positively an infant, though no doubt a precocious infant. Used men to ripen earlier, or was the world's work simpler? Or has romance been at her tricks, and have we here another of those grievous discrepancies between fact and old-fashioned fiction, which make Mr. Howells to go so heavily?

Old Montaigne did actually fix the age of full maturity at twenty. Like Lord Beaconsfield, he was a believer in youth. Even at his epoch he thought men ought to set about the world's work earlier than they did. "For my part" (I quote the quaint phrases of John Florio's translation which Shakespeare used) "I think that our minds are as full grown and perfectly jointed at twenty years as they shall be, and promise as much as they can. A mind which at that age hath not given some evident token or earnest of her sufficiency, shall hardly give it afterward, put her to what trial you list. Natural qualities and virtues, if they have any vigorous or beauteous thing in them, will produce and show the same within

that time or never." Yet even with him twenty is the age rather of promise than performance, and when the talk is of actions he raises his limit to thirty. "Of all humane, honourable, and glorious actions that ever came into my knowledge, I am persuaded I should have a harder task to number those which both in ancient times and in our own have been produced and achieved before the age of thirty years than such as were performed after. Yea, often in the life of the same men." Yet the only cases he cites are Hannibal, and his "great adversary," Scipio. "Both lived," says Montaigne, "the better part of their life with the glory which they had gotten in their youth; and though afterward they were great men in respect of all others, yet were they but mean in regard of themselves." *Ultima primis cedebant* was Livy's sentence on Scipio. Hannibal was twenty-nine when he invaded Italy. Scipio was thirty-two at Zama, but that was only the crowning victory of his second or third campaign; he had saved his father's life in a battle at the age of sixteen, and at eighteen he fought on the fatal field of Canne.

Bacon, who was inclined to agree with Montaigne as to the advantage of youth, does not add many instances. He quotes Cosimo who was appointed Duke of Florence in 1573 at the age of seventeen and proved an able ruler; also a certain Gaston de Foix. According to Bacon's last editor, this was probably a Viscount de Béarn, born in 1331, who served with distinction at the age of fourteen in military and then in civil business, and was described in his later years by Froissart as a pattern of chivalry. Cosimo governed a wily and turbulent population at seventeen, and Augustus Caesar by his brain and by his arm was master of the world at nineteen. Montaigne thought it an anomaly that the same Augustus, "That had been universal and supreme judge of the world when he was but nineteen years old, would by his laws have another to be thirty before he should be made a

competent judge of a cottage or farm." But Augustus Cæsar was an exceptionally wise youth. And yet,—perhaps because, as Lady Blandish hinted, Love does not love exceptionally wise youths,—Cleopatra, who was an expert in love, would have none of him as a lover. Our own Pitt, who, as we are so often reminded, was a minister at twenty-three, as a lover cut no figure at all.

How came Montaigne and Bacon to leave out Alexander? Early in his twenties he had added the conquest of Asia to the conquest of Greece. Before he died at thirty-two he had married three wives, and sighed for more worlds to conquer; and besides his unparalleled achievement, he was as beautiful as a god, if the sculptors are to be trusted. He might perhaps have put his youth to better purpose than to running after Thais and setting fire to Persepolis, but his marriage with the fair Roxana, the captive of his bow and spear, was after the most orthodox romantic pattern. Then there was the great Condé. Michelet says he was ill-favoured; I have a portrait which makes him fine-looking. But any way was not the conqueror of Rocroi at twenty-two a hero to fire a girl's imagination? And any woman, in romance or out of it, might have been proud to have had for lover the famous Duc de La Rochefoucauld, with his youth, his handsome face, his clever tongue, and his reckless bravery. Indeed, as a matter of history, a gracious line of remarkable women were proud to have him for their lover.

But these men were exceptions. They only prove the rule. And if I ransacked history for more instances they would be exceptions still. The normal youth of twenty is not at all the omnipotent person that the fancy of romance has painted him. Accordingly, when the novelists took to copying life instead of correcting it, they came round to the magistrate's way of thinking, and the age of the hero went up. I imagine that the hero of

twenty is an exception in the ordinary modern novel of ordinary life. Poor Pendennis at twenty was very little of a hero. He may fall in love with a Fotheringay, but a Fotheringay will hardly be so weak as to fall in love with him. If a Laura love him, she will wait and watch for him to grow into a man. Miss Ethel Newcome will flirt with Clive with a light heart, but could she be expected to think of the boy seriously? Jane Austen's Emma, who thoroughly knew her way about in match-making, surrendered her heart to the safe keeping of thirty-eight—such was the sober age of the admirable Knightly. Jane Eyre's Rochester was certainly no chicken. If you were to apply the brutal methods of Bayle to Ouida's Tricotrin, I believe (though I have never worked it out myself, being a poor hand at figures) that it would turn out that Tricotrin had attained the respectable age of seventy or eighty, when he cheats us of our tears by his apparently premature death at the barricades. Miss Broughton's magnificent ugly men are eminently mature. They are scarred and seamed with experiences like Milton's Satan. And (to the no small surprise of some of the clever novelist's sincerest admirers) Miss Broughton has been ranked high among English realists by no less a critic than M. Brunetière, and held up as a pattern to certain of his own countrymen who make a great cry of their realism—and no little wool.

Ah, Molière might say, this may be life, but it is not nature. M. Brunetière reiterates his point. He argues in his new volume of *Critical Essays on the History of French Literature* that Molière's moral was always for a return to nature from unnatural convention; from conventional and unnatural marriage, social fashions, morality, religion. Well, what precisely is meant by nature? There is an obvious truth and a number of unobvious fallacies in the ordinary distinction between nature and civilisation. A philosopher, whom M.

Brunetière knows a great deal better than I do, taught long ago once for all that it is man's nature to be civilised; and the sentiments and usages of civilisation—as I think M. Lemaître has urged in answer to M. Brunetière—mould and control even the instinctive impulses of love and passion. Where in history would Molière find his golden age or state of nature wherein the girls of sixteen fall in love only with the boys of twenty? Nausicaa's girl's heart was given almost at first sight to the middle-aged and much enduring hero, who had a wife and grown-up son and several other things awaiting him at home. It is one of the oldest and prettiest love stories in the world. And if you think that Ulysses got some unfair advantage from the grace that Athena shed about his head and shoulders, when the maidens looked the other way and he made his toilet on the sea-shore, what do you say to the case of Desdemona and her Moor? And if Shakespeare's word is not evidence, what do you say of Vanessa and Swift? A girl's instinct, according to Mr. Meredith, who is notoriously (so say his disciples) in the secrets of the sex, is for strength. This is, no doubt, a survival from the old-fashioned days when women used to look to men as their protectors and defenders. Well, strength is displayed in different ways in different ages and societies. So far as feats of chivalry went and Homeric derring-do, there was no particular reason perhaps why a youth should not be a hero so soon as his muscle was set. It has often struck me, in reading the *Iliad*, that the Trojan War was far liker to a series of football matches than to modern warfare. On the half-holidays, so to speak, when the weather was fine, the Greeks and Trojans would turn out for a match on the ringing plains, while the old boys looked on from the walls and the ships. Our play-grounds and hunting-fields could show almost as good a record of damages to life and limb as was suffered by the heroes in many

an Homeric combat or medieval tourney. But if the girl's instinct is for a man strong in her particular sphere—political, intellectual, or social; if her hero is to be a man among men in complex stages of society, she must put up with a lover of a certain age.

So much the worse for civilisation, Molière might insist. It is nature that speaks in the poetry and romance of the love of boy and girl. It is nature that speaks in the spectator's instinctive sympathy with the young lovers in the comedies. It is a natural and sacred law that youth should love youth. When civilisation puts youth and youth asunder, man is dividing what nature would join. And if history can produce no such golden age or state of nature an appeal might be made to the customs of the proletariat. The very name *proletariat* is warrant enough. Undistracted by conventional ambitions and undeterred by conventional scruples the proletariat increases and multiplies at an age which makes magistrates and Malthusians, economists and the guardians of the poor, tear their hair in dismay and indignation. And George Sand might be called to support the appeal. George Sand, of all women, could for opposite reasons have had no prejudices in favour of immaturity in marriage or love. Yet when she turned to study the country people about her at Nohant and to portray it in those charming village tales she wrote towards the close of her full-blooded career, the popular sentiment therein is definitely, not to say despotically, on M. Brunetière's side. "Germain," says Maurice to his son-in-law, in *La Mare au Diable*, "you must make up your mind to take another wife. It is two years since my daughter died, and your eldest boy is seven. You are going on for thirty, and after that a man is too old to marry." And then he proceeds to recommend Germain not to think of a young girl, but to look out for a seasoned widow of his own years. Germain in fact was

only twenty-eight; but he regarded himself, and was generally regarded by his neighbours, as too old to be the husband of a young girl. So when he fell in love with Marie, who was sixteen, he did not dare to tell her of his feelings; and when he married her, it was something of a scandal in the country-side.

Then Dickens, again. How Dickens loved to watch the boys and girls falling in love and marrying! Think of Tommy Traddles, defiant of conventionality, triumphantly playing Puss in the Corner with his five sisters-in-law in his business chambers at Gray's Inn; or of Scrooge's nephew and Scrooge's niece by marriage and Scrooge's niece's sisters at the ghostly Christmas party, and the shameless way Topper followed up the plump sister with the lace tucker at the game of Blind Man's Buff. "Why did you get married?" Scrooge had asked his nephew on the Christmas Eve in return for his Christmas greetings. "Because I fell in love." "Because you fell in love!" growled Scrooge, as if that were the only thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. Ebenezer Scrooge, you may remember, boasted that he helped to support the institutions of civilisation, the prison and the workhouse; and if the boys and girls must marry, and then when want came would rather die than take advantage of these institutions, —well, they had better die, he said, and decrease the surplus population. Or take *Bleak House*; the Court of Chancery and the great case of Jarndyce against Jarndyce,—there you have, no doubt, a triumph of civilisation; but Richard Carton and Ada, with their young love, had nature on their side. Richard confessed upon his deathbed that he had wedded his girl-wife to want, and that he had the world still to begin. Yet they had their reward.

Let us consult one more authority. Sir Anthony Absworthy Bearne Feverel, Baronet, of Raynham Abbey, had, like our worthy magistrate, medi-

tated deeply upon life and marriage. He brought up his son Richard on a system, and meant to marry him by system at the age of twenty-five. Unfortunately when this scientific humanist was away consulting family physicians and lawyers about a helpmeet for his peerless son, the magnetic youth sculling down the river had his vision of the magnetic maiden; and nature speaking in his bosom less sentimentally than the baronet he straightway took his part in one of the prettiest love-scenes in literature. Richard was only eighteen, Lucy was a year younger; about the age when they ought to have been whipped. So precisely thought Adrian Harley, the wise youth. But when the wise youth and the scientific humanist fought romance with civilisation, misery came of it. Mr. Meredith is no sentimentalist, he is indeed our scourge for sentimentalists; yet his heart is surely all with Richard and Lucy. Which is right? Richard Feverel or the Wise Youth? Molière or the Magistrate? Romance or Civilisation?

Well, suppose for a crooked answer to a cross question we betake ourselves to the lavish oracle of Bulwer Lytton. Bulwer wrote *Pelham* when he was twenty-two; and he represented Pelham as dominating a brilliant and cynical society when he had but barely left college. He wrote *Devereux* the year after; and Devereux concludes the history of his life at thirty-four with the confession that love was for him a thing of the past. It was twelve years later before *Ernest Maltravers* and its sequel *Alice* were finished; and the reader might gather from those romances that though eighteen may be the age of folly and passion, the age for true heroism is thirty-six. Later, Lytton took refuge in the old romantic device of an elixir of perpetual youth.—At whatever age one finds one's self, to be persuaded that *that* is the age of romance, is not this the true elixir of perpetual youth?

W. P. J.

THE FLIGHT FROM THE FIELDS.

WE are taught that one of the two serious blots on King David's scutcheon is due to his having insisted on numbering the people. Viewed by the light of modern experience the offence seems so venial that the expiatory sacrifice which it entailed, of seventy thousand lives, is at first sight wholly repugnant to our sense of just proportion. Fortunately, however, it is not for us to determine in this case the balance between the crime and its penalty; enough that in our own century we have been suffered to follow with apparent impunity the example set by the Israelitish monarch with such disastrous results to his nation. Perhaps, as some commentators suggest, it was a mere bit of braggadocio on his part, or was undertaken with an eye to increased taxation. Whatever his motive, we may be certain that he was influenced by no considerations equal in purity and benevolence to those which prompt the decennial enumerations of the present age. It is not indeed very easy to set down in strictly definite terms the precise value of our own periodical census. We cannot alter the total at which we so laboriously arrive, or by a stroke of the pen diminish the evils and hardships incident to a steady growth of population. Malthus himself with all his doctrines cannot avail to check the glut of humanity. But at least we are free from the imputation of a sinister aim. If by our numbering we effect no practical good, at any rate we do no appreciable harm; nay, we may even cheer the dreary life of the statistician by providing him from time to time with new tables for consultation and comparison, while to the commonplace philosopher we open a perfect mine of innocent speculation. How are all

these gaping mouths to be filled? How will it fare a few years hence with professions in which even now there is barely standing-room? Where are we all to live, where to be buried? The fittest, no doubt, will continue to survive, and the world's motto will remain, as heretofore, "The Devil take the hindmost"; but, fit or unfit, we must all in our bodily shape be somehow disposed of, and cremation will not become popular for many a long day. There is no end to the problems of this kind that a reflective mind can set itself, and the solutions may be whatever we please. These things lie on the knees of the gods.

But it is the primary business of a census to reveal facts rather than to promote theories. And one interesting fact which at the close of each decade asserts itself with growing emphasis is this: that the country is becoming gradually deserted in favour of the town. This Flight from the Fields, as we may call it, is no new phenomenon. The earliest symptoms of it appeared with the abolition of serfdom, and led in the year 1351 to that rigorous enactment known to history as the Statute of Labourers, by the terms of which the peasant was forbidden to quit the parish where he lived in search of better-paid employment; if he disobeyed he became a "fugitive," and subject to imprisonment at the hands of the justices of the peace. As manufactures, and commercial enterprise generally, began to extend in all directions, the inhabitants of the towns naturally multiplied apace, until in the latter half of the eighteenth century a cry arose that there were not hands enough left in the country districts to till the soil and gather in the fruits of the earth.

It was, however, difficult to prove the actual depopulation. No official record had hitherto been kept of the number of heads in each parish, and the evidence of the registers was not trustworthy, for registration was not yet ordained by law, and consisted for the most part of the entries made by parson or clerk. Thus none but those were included who, or whose parents, belonged to the State Church. It was only here and there that a Gilbert White existed, curious and painstaking enough to go from house to house and deliberately count the inmates. At this juncture appeared Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, a lament which, in addition to its acknowledged poetical value, contains sundry home-truths singularly applicable to the condition of things in our own day, a hundred and twenty years later. "Sweet Auburn," indeed, finds many a counterpart in the modern villages of agricultural counties. The causes which led to the exodus in Goldsmith's time were, some of them, identical with those which prevail now. It is worth while to consider what these causes were and are, and also what new allurements the march of time has discovered, so irresistible in rustic eyes.

They may be divided broadly into two classes, those of necessity and those of choice. For we must not forget that, if the peasants and their offspring have been leaving the country, the country also has been steadily leaving them. When Virgil told the farmers that they were the happiest of mortals if they could but become conscious of their good fortune, he did not contemplate an era of steam-ploughs and threshing-machines, or bear in mind the unconscionable waywardness of a British climate. Nor did he anticipate the difficulty of maintaining a family on a precarious wage—in severe weather apt to vanish altogether—of twelve to fourteen shillings a week. So, too, when Cicero in his dogmatic fashion declares that of all professions none is better, more profitable, or more

worthy of a free man, than the pursuit of agriculture, we must not apply the dictum literally to those who, as master and man, follow the calling in, let us say, Norfolk or Herefordshire. Probably, if we were able to consult a full and unimpeachable record of the past, we should find that at no period and in no country has rural life combined Arcadian simplicity with real comfort and contentment.

Those of us who are descending into the vale of years can conjure up sundry sights and sounds now no longer to be encountered in the course of a country walk. Not many, for example, of the present generation can have seen, and fewer heard, a flail. That venerable implement, already well on its way towards extinction, will soon be found only among the curiosities of a museum. And yet, not long ago, how proud a part it played in the farmer's economy! Who that has ever listened to it can forget the rhythmical cadence of four flails plied by skilful hands? The echo of it will never quite die out of his ears. The time was kept so rigidly, each melodious thud fell with such unerring precision, that the result was a musical quartette which never jarred upon the most sensitive tympanum, for it meant bread. To this tune it was that for centuries our golden grain was shed upon the barn-floor. The term itself may be traced back in our literature to the very earliest examples of a settled English language. Langland uses it in *Piers Plowman*, and it may be, for all we know, a relic of the Roman occupation, for it is undoubtedly, so at least say the shrewdest etymologists, a corruption of the Latin *flagellum*—possibly, but not certainly, through the Old French *flael*. But its glory is departed with the horny hands which once wielded it so deftly. The art of threshing by hand has given place to the noisier, unmusical, but far more expeditious method whose presence is betrayed by the column of black smoke and the snorting engine of civilization. The work which erewhile kept four men busy through the

winter months is now accomplished in a couple of days. The scythe and sickle, again, once indispensable and universal, have lost their importance, and are reserved only for emergencies. Where storms have ruthlessly laid the crops, their virtue is still, if grudgingly, acknowledged, and on the steep hill-side the new-fangled mower is helpless. But we no longer identify them with the harvest. They are as scarce as the gleaners, whose poor perquisite is now, thanks to a diligent use of the rake, reduced to a sorry minimum. The reaper, indeed, has fared somewhat better. Him and his sickle we meet in all tongues and in all ages, nor can they be said to have altered in any essential respect since their first appearance in the harvest-field. If we turn to a Dictionary of Antiquities, we find them represented on some of the most ancient coins known to numismatists, or confronting us in hieroglyphics and the earliest existing specimens of pictures in stone. It is the reaper who symbolizes in the poets two of the profoundest mysteries which environ mankind, Time and Death. The plough, since Triptolemus first invented it, has undergone many changes and improvements, though a type closely corresponding to the original is still jealously maintained in some few ultra-conservative lands, as, for instance, in some parts of Northern Italy and India. But the sickle of to-day, let us rather say of yesterday, is at least as old as Homer and Hesiod, and has never appreciably diverged from the primitive model.

The flail and the sickle, each of which once kept many a pair of hands employed, having thus retired in favour of more complicated but infinitely less dilatory machines, one reason why rural districts are more thinly populated now than formerly stands immediately disclosed. The same work now occupies less time and fewer hands. The mower is an ungainly object, especially when it embraces also the function of a sheaf-binder; but it requires the attention of only two men

to effect in a single day what would once have occupied a dozen men for a week. It is only when the carting begins, and the weather is threatening, that the lack of strong arms is apt to make itself felt. This was the case in some parts of the country during the last harvest, which in many cases was easily cut, but with the greatest difficulty carried. Even with all the mechanical appliances now at his command the farmer could not contrive to do everything in the one week of fine weather vouchsafed to him. High wages, with contingent advantages in the shape of unlimited small beer or cider, sometimes failed to attract the desired quota of labourers. It was not that the tempting offers were discarded, but rather that there was no one to discard them. There was no reserve, as heretofore, of men anxiously looking out for a day's work. They had fled from the fields; a bare crew remained, just sufficient to work the ship in fair weather, but there were no supernumeraries, no stowaways even, to man the pumps when a crisis arrived. In a year of average sunshine this would not have mattered; but no successful antidote has yet been discovered to repeated showers of rain during the ticklish operation of ingathering. In years to come no doubt the missing nostrum will be duly supplied. The farmer will press a button, and his crops will fall in symmetrical lines to the earth; a second, and they will rise in orderly sheaves and shocks; a third, and they will be spirited in a moment of time to his garner, or range themselves in comely ricks, or betake themselves whithersoever he may desire, perhaps to the market itself, returning in a new golden shape to their expectant master. But that will not come to pass just yet, for all the strides of mechanics and electricity. For the present the husbandman must even take his chance, like the rest of us, "with heigh-ho! the wind and the rain"; and, unhappily for him, his interests are, more than the rest, at the mercy of the barometer.

Obviously, then, it is not mere caprice that urges the rank and file of English villages to abandon their native hills and dales and seek a living elsewhere. Though hands be skilful and arms as brawny as ever, iron arms are cheaper, and fingers that work by steam more amenable to discipline than flesh and blood can be. When, therefore, he finds the reaping and threshing of his fathers superseded by the new labour-saving appliances, and nothing left for himself but the occasional pursuits of sowing and hoeing, the rustic must needs think it is time to be gone. At least, if too old himself to make a move, he will impress upon his children the necessity of striking out a new path. And in these days he will probably address hearers who are not only open to conviction, but are already eager to tempt fortune under another sky, though it be no further distant than the nearest manufacturing town. For many influences have of late years been at work to foster the spirit of adventure and the love of change, and they have nothing to do with the farmer's inability to provide employment for so many hands as formerly. In any case, agriculture being what it now is, necessity would have thinned the dwellers in the cottages, for the mind of Hodge, if not abnormally nimble, is nevertheless quite capable of reasoning that without work there can be no pay, and without pay no means of honest livelihood. But necessity has been well seconded by inclination. The day is long past when the villager was the obedient servant of the squire and the parson, inclined to believe that he was made of an altogether inferior material, and fearing nothing so much as the loss of their countenance. He has discovered—partly through his own observation and research, and still more, perhaps, through the persistent hammering of journeymen agitators of various complexions—that he has not only a soul of his own, but a body entirely at his own disposal. Time was when father

and sons worked together in the same fields under the same master, and scarcely realized that there was a world beyond the parish bounds, or at any rate the county town. But now it is a rare case to find a complete family. If the father still labours in the fields of his youth, the sons are scattered; one, it may be, is in New Zealand, another in America, a third in London, a fourth in Birmingham. Often it is not known with any certainty where they all are; it is perfectly plain where they are not—they are no longer at home.

Difficulties in respect of work and wages are by no means confined to the country. Yet everybody assumes that he can be usefully and remuneratively employed in the town, until bitter experience destroys the delusion. But rural life in modern times presents, especially to the youthful mind, other disabilities which are in no way connected with wages and work. Perhaps it was never so charming as the poets would have us believe; at least, it may fairly be doubted whether the idyllic happiness with which they have credited it would have ever been endorsed beyond the confines of Arcadia. We are invited to observe the general air of hilarity pervading the carter and the ploughman,—“How jocund did they drive their team afield!” Whatever may have been the prevailing rustic temperament in Gray's century, it exhibits in our own assuredly a very meagre proportion of jocundity. Jocund, forsooth!—they are at the very nadir of dulness and depression. It would be pleasant could we satisfy ourselves that it was ever otherwise. In the absence of ocular proof we must fall back upon the records, no doubt more or less highly coloured, which have come down to us. By the light of these it would certainly seem that the spirits of the countryman have sunk to an abnormally low ebb. The brook babbles as musically as ever, the song of the thrush has lost none of its “linked sweetness,” the glory of the golden gorse still charms our eyes

as it charmed the eyes of Linnæus; but Theocritus himself could detect no corresponding blitheness in the man who now passes his life amid these fair surroundings. Why is it that he has become so stolid, so uninterested—alas! so uninteresting? Why is it that the country, even though work were abundant and wages liberal, would fail to keep its sons at home?

One answer to these questions is presumably to be found in the changed conditions of social life. It is still, and let us hope it will always be, an agreeable experience to exchange from time to time the exhausted air of cities for the pure breezes of the hill-side. We do not stay long enough to become conscious of anything like monotony; many of us honestly regret that we are forced to hurry back so soon. Least of all do we lament the absence of those festive customs which once made the country almost as lively as the town. We go in quest of rural scenery, rural fare, rural peace and quietness, and these being happily discovered and enjoyed, our holiday is complete. It is nothing to us that there are no distractions, no amusements; it is even a distinct relief to be quit of such things for a while, and to throw ourselves unreservedly into the arms of the Great Mother. Probably we do not for a moment consider how it would be if we were doomed to spend, not an occasional fortnight, but a whole lifetime, in her company, with no more variety than falls to the lot of Mr. and Mrs. Hodge, and with household arrangements on the same scale as theirs. For them, however, it is in truth a very different matter. They have long ago ceased to derive, if indeed they ever derived, any special satisfaction from living face to face, as it were, with Nature; it is notorious that genuine country-folk are deplorably ignorant of natural history. For them, life too often means a mere grind, year in year out, illumined by none of the mild dissipation which once, if we are to believe the chroniclers, added a gentle zest to

what must always have been a somewhat tedious existence, soured, as it not seldom is by periodically recurring exigencies, of which their few weekly shillings will rarely allow them to become quite independent. In a large village there may yet survive some poor semblance of animation, but an outlying hamlet must be, for all the social amenities it affords, a very abomination of desolation. Morality, it may be, stands higher now than formerly, but it has been purchased at the cost of all hilarity. It seems a pity that the two cannot exist together. Some good judges are of opinion that in many of our villages neither the one nor the other is now to be detected; the people are neither good nor gay. Possibly this is a libel; let us, at any rate, give them credit for being as decorous as they are dull, until our own experience proves the contrary.

We may take it for granted that no milkmaid has been known for many a long year to sing Kit Marlowe's "smooth song," as was the habit of her kind in old Izaak's day. Singing or silent, she is rarely visible in modern meadows. She and her simple leisurely ways must have begun to disappear from rural economy so soon as it became possible to transport the milk a hundred miles from cow to consumer. There is no time left for singing now, when at all hazards a certain train must be caught, or so many precious gallons will be wasted. The milk-farmer of to-day is far too practical a person to engage the service of winsome Maudlin. His milkmaids in all likelihood are made of sterner stuff than that light-hearted damsel who "cast away all care and sung like a nightingale." With her, however, has departed a cheery type which the country could ill afford to lose, if it was to retain its character for the poetry of hand-service. She is gone with the smock-frocks and the harvest-homes. At the celebration of the latter it is probable that she used to play a prominent part, but she can

hardly be pictured in connection with its now universal substitute, the harvest-thanksgiving. Once again it must be acknowledged that a good deal of harmless merriment has been sacrificed, and in lieu of it the peasant has received what must, in his eyes at least, be eminently unsubstantial in comparison. The wildest freaks of harvest-home can never have warranted its suppression. It was at any rate one of the few red-letter days to which the farmer's hard-worked, but cheerful, staff could look forward. It bred and fostered a pleasant feeling of mutual regard between master and men for which we now look in vain. Those were the days when a grandfather, father, and son might now and again be seen working on one farm, and when a service of from forty to fifty years' duration was considered nothing extraordinary. Each labourer could, and did, then take a personal interest, nay, cherish a sense of actual co-partnership, in the acres which he helped to cultivate. But both farmers and farmmen are now continually on the move. There is no longer a wholesome feeling of interdependence, but in its place too often a condition of veiled hostility, apt at critical moments to break out into open warfare or summary desertion. Hodge is now, politically, as good a man as his master, and the fact has been so dinned into his ears by pestilent agitators, that at length he has become aware, not indeed of the real meaning and value of his vote, but of his increasing importance as a member of provincial society. He must be coaxed and his humours carefully consulted, if he is to condescend to work on the land. With the best intentions in the world, the master sometimes finds it a hard matter to avoid wounding his sensitive prejudices, for he suffers in these days from hyperæsthesia, a dangerous malady from which his forefathers were absolutely free.

The harvest festival is usually held in the early days of October, and the

parson is in many cases braced for the occasion by a holiday of six weeks, or longer, from which he has just returned full of health and appreciation of foreign travel. He still wears on his manly brow the record in bronze of his feats as an Alpine climber. We must do him the justice to suppose that he is conscious of no incongruity when he mounts his elaborately beflowered pulpit and implores his humble hearers to be unceasingly thankful for the good gifts which Providence showers upon them. Peradventure the ingathering of the fruits of the earth in his own neighbourhood has been attended with heart-breaking loss and disappointment. It matters not. Farmer Giles is half ruined and wholly disgusted; he is implored to render thanks for the excellent harvest in Chili and Manitoba. The grain of Farmer Stubbs lies rotting in the fields; "My brother, be thankful, the crops in Hungary and the south of Russia are far above the average." If his words really carried weight, this would be a melancholy view in the eyes of his agricultural parishioners, but they fall for the most part on deaf ears. All attention is directed to the effective dressing of the church, which his daughters have compassed with their usual skill. Curiously enough, there is hardly any wheat to be seen,—it is too commonplace; but the long trails of russet bramble-leaves and the brilliant cornel-berries certainly look extremely well. Does it, perhaps, sometimes strike the rheumatic hedger and ditcher, once a foremost hand with scythe and sickle, that, pretty as it all is, a good supper of beef and beer would be a surer passport to his stock of gratitude? His work is, and always has been, surely much harder than the parson's, but holidays are unknown to him. He is old enough, maybe, to remember many changes: on the whole, could he honestly deliver his soul, would he admit that they have been changes for the better? He can call to mind a time when the church services indeed were fewer and less showy,

but the parson took no regular holiday, and somehow seemed to have more to bestow on his poorer neighbours than parsons have now. The parish was not left each year for weeks together in the charge of a stranger, nor used the vicarage to be let at so many guineas a week to no matter what species of tenant provided the rent was duly forthcoming. If he were a reader of *The Guardian* or *The Church Times*, he would be fairly amazed at the frantic struggle among incumbents with eligible parsonages to secure, in the first place, a handsome sum for the use of house and garden during the months of August and September, and, secondly, some sort of substitute, the cheaper the better (say, at a guinea a week and the privilege of riding a wall-eyed cob) for the benefit of the few poor sheep in the wilderness.

Absenteeism, however, is after all neither so rampant nor so serious among the clergy as among the landed gentry. Religious observances can always be discharged decently and in order so long as there is a duly qualified minister on the spot. He may not be the legally constituted holder of the benefice, for the duties are not essentially personal; nay, a little variety in the pulpit is sometimes held to be even salutary. But a country gentleman cannot sell or let his house, and pass on to a stranger, with the lease or title-deeds, the local interests and responsibilities which are in his family the growth of many generations. No wonder the country is dull when those whose traditions are bound up with all that was once so blithe and neighbourly are compelled to pitch their tents elsewhere. Probably no one regrets the change more than themselves. Through no fault of their own many of them have been forced in recent years to watch their estates becoming more and more encumbered, until finally the last straw is laid, and they and the old home must part company. They are necessarily succeeded by one who knows not Hodge, who possibly does

not care to know him, and who certainly cannot inspire him with the affection and reverence bestowed as a matter of course upon a county family as old as the hills. Mere money makes no great impression on the genuine countryman, and the modern plutocrat who in buying "a place" thinks also to acquire a fee simple of the loyalty of his cottagers is usually mistaken. His coming is felt to break the continuity of things and to encourage the already prevalent spirit of unrest. It is one nail more in the coffin of the Old Style.

Merry England was so called not for the festive character of its metropolitan music-halls, or the reckless gaiety of its beanfeasts and Bank Holidays, but for the cheerful demeanour of its country parishes. It was the country which maintained the national reputation for good fellowship. A visit to the shires is recommended by Burton himself as distinctly antipathetic to melancholy. He would scarcely recommend it at the close of the nineteenth century. He is all for rural hilarity. "For my part," he declares, "I will subscribe to the king's declaration, and was ever of that mind, that May games, wakes, and Whitsun ales, &c., if they be not at unseasonable hours, may justly be permitted. Let them freely feast, sing, and dance, have their puppet-plays, hobby-horses, tabors, crowds, bagpipes, &c., play at ball and barley-breaks, and what sports and recreations they like best." The list almost takes one's breath away. Who ever hears of a hobby-horse or a barley-break in a modern village? Even the dance on the green is a rare phenomenon; where it survives it is usually for the benefit of a class superior to the Williams and Audreys. The latter have lost all their agility, and tread a measure with the utmost diffidence and angularity, as though they had laid too severely to heart the ancient theory that no man would ever dance till he was drunk. There is nothing to take the place of the frolics which have died out, and each succeeding decade has to

mourn the loss of some further shred of festivity which helped ever so little to break the dead level of monotony. The fairs are a mere ghost of their former jolly selves. No doubt they did occasionally lead to scenes in which the bounds of propriety were treated with scant regard; liberty, as from time to time it always has done and always will do, degenerated into license. Orgies came to pass here and there: the chimes were heard at midnight; and, in the small hours when decent folks should be sleeping the sleep of the just, the parish constable's head was apt to be broken. But orgies and broken heads were not abolished by the suppression or mutilation of rustic gatherings; they were merely transferred to the towns. Sometimes, indeed, business fell off to such a degree that the fairs died a natural and lingering death; railways diverted the course of trade; competition ruined one district and enhanced the importance of another. But whatever the cause of their decline, and whatever the arguments against their continuance, it will readily be conceded that with their collapse there also departed a highly-valued fund of harmless amusement which made a landmark in the peasant's weary round.

No coaches now thunder through the village street; no red-coated guard with his yard of tin wakes the echoes of the country-side, scaring the lapping and rousing the harsh challenge of the jay. True, there is during the summer months a feeble revival, or rather imitation, of the coaching age, but it is, and is well known to be, a mere whim indulged in by a few who can afford to lose time and money. Nor does it penetrate into the genuine country. Nothing can seriously interfere with the sway of the railroad until some means of locomotion independent alike of steam and of horse-flesh becomes possible and popular. But the train, though it brings town and country nearer together, does not supply the place of the coach. It

takes away more and more of the villagers, but it promotes no festivity, engenders no affectionate interest. Rather it rides rough-shod over old customs and associations, and symbolizes very faithfully the insane hurry and bustle of the present age.

It remains to sum up very briefly the causes which tend, as each new census emphatically proves, to diminish our rural population. In some of them the cause can hardly be distinguished from the effect. Many cheerful customs have fallen through owing to the lack of interest and support; on the other hand, sometimes the lack of patronage—that is, the lack of people—may in a measure be due to the dullness induced by the extinction of the customs. Up to a certain point it is of course advantageous that the population of agricultural parishes should be kept within due bounds. The country offers to the poor but very few opportunities of employment save on the land. A village will be able to support half-a-dozen small tradesmen, but seldom more. The bulk of the male inhabitants must be occupied in the fields. It would therefore be manifestly embarrassing if no one would budge. Happily there has very seldom been any apprehension on this score. The fear is lest the life of the farm-labourer should become so distasteful that our reputation, as a people, for good husbandry will be seriously impaired. The improved, or at least expanded, teaching of the last twenty years has opened many rustic minds to facts which would otherwise have been very gradually assimilated. It has become tolerably well known that life in the town is on the whole a better paid and infinitely more exhilarating experience than in the woods, the meadows, or the corn-fields. The hours of work are shorter, the food is more varied and perhaps better, holidays are not uncommon, wages are higher. There is not the same exposure to weather, and in case of illness there are facili-

ties in the shape of hospital comforts which are conspicuous only by their absence in a remote hamlet. Again, there is comparative independence, and, at the same time, the means are abundant of gratifying man's naturally social and sociable tendencies. To plough or hoe all day without exchanging a look or a word with a fellow-creature is excellent for purposes of contemplation, but it is dull. In the town there is constant motion, an endless stream of human life going, passing, returning. There are a thousand petty incidents, each more or less interesting, for one that happens on the farm. Moreover there are definite amusements for play-hours. It is perhaps fortunate that in the country so little leisure is possible to the working man. He would not know what to do with himself in his enforced idleness. None of the old recognized country pastimes have survived, or none in which he can comfortably bear a hand. His very children do not get their cricket and football as do their cousins in the suburb. His existence is utterly devoid of speculation. There are possibilities in every town, but none in the country, where the peasant's highest hopes are restricted to regular employment all the year round. He may have in him the makings of a Hampden or a Milton, but neither he, nor his neighbours, will ever know it. He can never rise beyond the position of head-carter.

Obviously he cannot save money; and unless he be young enough to emigrate, he must live and die an eminently useful man, but wholly innocent of change or entertainment.

Such, then, are some of the reasons which seem to account for the desertion of the fields. They may be stated succinctly as want of work and abhorrence of dullness. Perhaps the one person left in humble life who can appreciate the delights of the country is the poacher. His is a calling to which hilarity is foreign; he never finds the country dull so long as game is plentiful and his ear and eye do not play him false. But he stands alone. The presumption is that in days to come he will pursue his illegal but fascinating way with even less fear of interruption than at present. For, unless some sudden revulsion of feeling ensues, the human population of those regions which he explores so carefully will grow gradually less and less, until finally a day must arrive when the farmer, if he is to farm any longer, will have to manipulate his crops by the aid of automata. The attractions of the towns and the colonies will soon prove too strong a magnet for the few remaining labourers; and the economy of hand-service which he inaugurated to save his own pocket he will be compelled to practise still more completely in order to save himself from utter ruin.

ARTHUR GAYE.

SIR MICHAEL.

A FANTASY ON AN ALTAR-PIECE OF PERUGINO. (*Nat. Gall. No. 288.*)

THE sun of a bright February afternoon, already making its power felt on our favoured southern coast, lit up a motley and excited crowd in the white market-place of a little fishing town whose general appearance has not much changed since the day we speak of, now nearly four centuries ago. Room was made for the township and for the port by the southward opening of a rich and warm valley fed with the benignant sun and moisture that England knows not east of the Exe. All ways in the village finally led to the market-place, and out of the market-place one came down to the foreshore by a fairly well-kept road. On the north side a lane wound upwards through the valley overlooked from a slight eminence by the Manor House, which commanded a view far to east and west over the changing tints of the Channel sea. At this time, however, there was evidently trouble of some kind stirring, and yet no sign from the Manor. In truth, Sir Guy Trevanion had been away for some years, and no one knew exactly when to look for his return. The family had kept themselves clear of treasons and forfeitures through the Wars of the Roses, but were suspected of Yorkist leanings; and shortly after Henry the Seventh's power was established, Sir Guy had received a friendly hint from a high quarter that he would not do amiss to spend some time in honourable foreign adventures. Accordingly he had betaken himself with a picked band of men-at-arms, like other good knights of many nations, to the service of those Catholic and politic princes Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. His wife received intelligence from time to time, and it was understood that

Sir Guy was doing right good service against the Moors, and had been specially honoured by Queen Isabella. It was also told that he had gotten for a sworn brother-in-arms a certain knight of Malta, known as Sir Luke, an Italian gentleman whose deeds against the Infidels, aided by family connexions with a prince of the Church, had earned him the right to think and say many things which might have exposed the soul of an ordinary citizen to the paternal care of the nearest spiritual court, and his body and goods to the temporal consequences of excommunication and penance, or severer forms of proceeding.

Now Port Enoch, being in an English diocese, was also not unblest with the jurisdiction of a bishop and an archdeacon, and all things a Court Christian ought to have about it. In those days there was a new archdeacon, a business-like clerk whose approved orthodoxy was well matched with a keen appetite for fees. As the Trevanions were understood to have no love for officials and summoners, and there was not much money in the village, Port Enoch had mostly been let alone by the archdeacon's predecessors. But the absence of the lord with the best of his men seemed now to offer a fair opening; and a subject was not wanting. An old retainer of the Manor, by name Jenifer Datcher, had long been noted by ecclesiastical authority as being suspected of heresy, or sorcery, or both. The substance of her offence was neither worse nor better than that for many years she had been the wise woman of the village, and her cures had been more numerous and successful than any common lay person's ought to be. She once even brought round a girl reputed

to be possessed, on whom the regular process of exorcism had failed; which manifestly was an enormous and censurable presumption. Most chietly, however, the archdeacon reflected that, by setting the process of his court in motion against her while the powers of resistance were still weak, he could scarcely fail to make something out of it in the way of fees, fines, or, still better, a moderate amount of ostensible fees, and a more substantial bribe from the Manor House for settling the affair on easy terms. Therefore it was that on this February afternoon Port Enoch was invaded by a sompnour (if one may preserve the Chaucerian form), together with the secular arm in the shape of a sheriff's officer and a somewhat ragged fraction of the power of the county. Having entered the village by a coast road, they found themselves confronted in the market-place by the available men of Port Enoch; men of a sturdy breed, who, though inferior in numbers, were not disposed to yield to archdeacon or sheriff without dispute. They had no one leader and no plan of action, but their words were of the kind that show a readiness to pass into deeds if a leader is found.

"Attach our Jenifer to archdaken's court, will 'ee? 'Hath a-done us more good here to Port Enoch, vather and zon, these vorty year, than ever yüü did with your trashy trade."

"*Significavit*, zaid 'ee! 'tis more like to signify broken mazzards to some of 'ee, true as yüü'm there."

Such were some of the more quotable remarks of the men of Port Enoch. Meanwhile the sompnour, a fat little man with a foxy head, was waxing impatient and urging the officer to risk an assault, when a diversion was caused by the sudden appearance of Lady Trevanion. She was followed by a dozen of stout men and lads from the Manor, who quietly reinforced the groups of fishermen. The lady went from one to another with words of encouragement.

"What! shall these shavelings have away our people before our face? Must I take down the old sword that Sir Hugh bore at Lewes, and lead you myself? Billy Beer, they call you a boy, but you have the stuff of three such men as those. Peter Cottle, they say you be an old ancient man, but you are full young enough to beat a sompnour's pate; and hark——" Here Lady Trevanion whispered something to Peter Cottle which caused his eyes to open enormously, and a flash of joyful intelligence, promptly subdued with some effort, to pass over his face. She continued aloud: "You, Peter, take the command. Dick Pengelly, you aid him. Do your best, friends all, as if Sir Guy were here, and when he comes back let him know how you deal with apparitors and such cattle that come prying and sneaking in Port Enoch."

Notwithstanding these brave words the forces of the law spiritual and temporal were obviously more than a match for the defenders. But the spiritual officer did not want a scandal, and also had no personal love of strife at any time; and the temporal officer had no great mind for fighting in that cause. Accordingly the sompnour began to parley. Lady Trevanion disappeared with two or three followers, leaving Peter Cottle as chief spokesman. It is needless to relate the negotiations, which were carried on in a diffuse and rich dialect. After about an hour's talk the representative of the Church declared that his patience was exhausted, and gave the order to advance. If he had kept a look-out to the flanks he might have seen how certain of Lady Trevanion's men stole down the sides of the market-place and posted themselves at the openings of the lanes. And if he had listened, he might possibly have heard something from the higher ground. But he neither saw nor heard anything out of the common. To the surprise and relief, for somewhat different reasons, of the sompnour and the sheriff's officer, the men of Port Enoch, seem-

ingly for want of any coherent order, fell back almost at once; and already the way seemed clear to Jenifer Datcher's house, where that person was keeping up her reputation for uncanny ways by looking out of the window as if she were not in the least concerned. But the secular officer's ear, more exercised in such things than the sompnour's, now caught above the general murmur and clamour a new sound of ill omen. It could be nothing else; it was the ringing beat of hoofs on the cobblestones, mixed with the clink of iron. And before one could ask what more it meant, the retiring crowd suddenly parted at a sign from old Peter Cottle, the only person who did not look surprised, and a swaying, flashing mass rushed out from the northern lane into the sun, whose rays, now nearly level, turned the following dust-cloud into a fiery mist, and the weapons seen through it into change-ful lightnings; and as the thundering mass came forth it took form, and spread out into a front of half-a-dozen men-at-arms, whose spears all came down to the rest with one click and remained there with terrible exactness of dressing. In the centre was the well-known blazon of Trevanion, and beside it was a black armour of outlandish fashion marvellously wrought. But indeed there was no time to study these niceties, for it seemed to every one of the archdeacon's and the sheriff's people that a horse and man were specially intent on riding him down, and the point of a long spear was coming straight into his own particular face; and besides, as every one of them thought in the same fraction of a second, it was but a scurvy quarrel for an Englishman to peril his head in. So there was a feeble scattering flight of arrows and maybe a score of stones thrown, and then the powers ecclesiastical and temporal did what half-disciplined levies charged home by trained cavalry have always done and always will do so long as there is fighting in the world,—they fled in confusion, and, in this case, in the one direction open

to them. Only the coast road by which they had reached the village was now cut off by the spring tide. Nothing was left for it but surrender, and they had not even the satisfaction of yielding themselves to men of worship. It was Peter Cottle who received their submission with a serene chuckle and took measures for their immediate safe keeping, the strange knight in the black armour looking on with silent approval.

A well-grown boy, almost of age to bear arms, came riding sharply down with two or three of the men and called to the knight: "Sir Luke, we have need of you up at the Manor. Come and see to father."

"What, Sir Guy hurt?" said the other. "I lost him in the press, and thought he had stayed to order matters up there. It is not grave? I knew not any of us had taken harm."

"I pray not, sir," answered the boy, "but I cannot tell. You know he was riding with his iron cap; he would not put on a helm for this gear; a stone caught him on the head, and they took him up senseless. They say you have learnt much skill among the Moors."

"Nay, with or without skill I must be at my companion's side. I suppose these good folk will keep sufficient ward; and so, my young friend, take me back with you."

"No fear for that, Master Walter and Sir Knight," said Cottle. "We'll warrant you for they varmint."

II.

"'Tis nothing, Lord be praised therefor," said Jenifer Datcher, looking up, as Walter Trevanion and Sir Luke entered the half-lighted hall, from where she was bending over Sir Guy. "'Twould never have mazed 'en so, but 'a rode in the heat fasting."

Sir Luke made a rapid inspection, nodded approval of Jenifer's very simple treatment, and produced a silver flask from which he sprinkled a few drops on Sir Guy's face. As their heads showed together in the light of

Jenifer's candle, a stranger would have thought that an English host was tending his foreign guest, for Sir Guy was as dark as many men of southern lands, and Sir Luke was of that square-built and fair-complexioned North Italian type which still bears witness to the faithfulness of Fra Angelico's pencil. The unknown fluid spread a subtle and refreshing perfume. Jenifer looked on in sincere admiration, Lady Trevanion with delight, Walter and the other children with a mixture of joy, curiosity, and fear.

"Yes," said Sir Luke, "there are things to be learnt from these Infidels. And they fought like gentlemen too. He is coming round." In a few moments Sir Guy opened his eyes, raised himself on his hands, and began to speak.

"Have 'ee got an apple, sonnies? West-country fruit, west-country speech,—better than all the golden pomegranates of Spain. What's that? In the nick of time, brother Luke, to learn archdeacons to archdiaconise here,—good hap that I sent on that messenger! Well thought on, Lucy; a good device, and of a true soldier's wife; I could not better it; ay, hold them in talk a while, hold them in talk—What, Walter, wilt ride with us? A good boy and well grown since I saw thee, but too young,—what, not be gainsaid? Take him then, Gilbert, and have a good care of him,—shalt see if the story-books say true that Cornish knights be men of no worth. Forward, men! ah, see the fat sompnoir run,—eleu in there! fetch 'en out! Jenifer's safe enough. But you are Jenifer—and where am I? They never stood up to us, the rogues. All friends here,—and yet I seem to have come by a clout on the head."

A few words from Lady Trevanion and Sir Luke, and the ministration, this time inwardly, of some other strange liquor, restored Sir Guy to full consciousness. "Well," said he, "I have dreamt goodly dreams; something belike of the tales Sir Luke and

I had been telling on board ship,—I know not. But who be these?"

Dick Pengelly with two or three companions now came forward, having been sent up by Peter Cottle to report and take further orders. After being assured that his lord was doing well and could hear him, Pengelly explained the situation in language which, for the reader's ease and patience, must be freely abridged and reduced to book English.

"Some of us were for holding a court upon 'en, me being the reeve, so please you, and the less writing the better, we said, for if so be we had one that was a book schollard and could keep a roll, 'twould only be twisted some way against us if ever it came to 'sides; but Peter Cottle did say 'twouldn't be any justiceable sort of rights without Sir Guy there, so we thought 'twas a pity to have nothing to tell 'ee, and we handselled 'en some such rights as might seem belonging by nature, till you could serve 'en out proper justice."

"Paid in their own money," said Sir Luke, "*sine figura et strepitu judicii*."

"We could never pay 'en with no Latin," continued Dick; "but the bailiff, being one that in a manner serves the King, and that we'd no such bitter quarrel with, we gave 'en his choice fair and plain, to be rolled in a vuzzy vaggot or to dang bishop and archdaken. So 'a zaid out like a true man, that I could like 'en well for it all my life days, 'twould have been meat and drink to him, saving the virtue of his office, if 'a could have danged 'en out loud these vower hours and more; and so 'a did most free and cheerful. And then we broft 'en with joy and gladness into the Blue Dragon, as the sinner that repenteth, and zet 'en down with a cup of good zider. And the sompnoir, being of a more black-hearted and dangerous fashion, and 'customed to bite mankind, we let 'en bide safe in stocks for to know your honour's pleasure."

"All very well done," said Lady

Trevanion, after a consultation with Sir Guy. "My husband bids me speak for him, and thank you all. You may bring up the sompnour here in an hour or so; our friend Sir Luke is almost as good a clerk as a knight, and would fain say some profitable words to him. Let the sheriff's men have a drink of cider all round, and our free peace; they had little stomach for this business from the first, and will have none to begin again. And so, good speed!"

In a short time Sir Guy, who really needed rest and food more than anything else, was pretty much himself again, and the children, who were a little disappointed that he had not brought home at least five Moorish kings in golden chains, began to question him about his campaigns. Lady Trevanion, however, supported by Jenifer and Sir Luke, insisted on Sir Guy not being called on for his adventures till the morrow. "Well then, father," said Hugh, the second boy, lifting up his large blue eyes from those of the hound Bruno, with whom he had been holding an intent conversation without words, "are you strong enough to tell us the pretty things you said you had been dreaming?"

"I think I might do that," said Sir Guy, "the rather that, as I have often noted in such cases, I should have clean forgotten my dream to-morrow morning if I put off telling it." And this was the dream Sir Guy told.

III.

"As we rode down upon that rabble I marked right in front of me a sort of lubberly half-grown boy, and with some little ado I guided my spear that I might pass only near enough to frighten him, for I had no mind to shed blood. Then I saw that he lifted a stone in his hand, and I knew no more till I seemed to be unarmed and alone, in a marvellous great waste country under a gray sky. Anon there came a fellowship riding,

but their going made no sound. And some rode as they were princes and great folk, dukes and bishops and knights and ladies of worship, and some as merchants and citizens, and some as poor and needy people. But all was gray as beechen ashes, riders and horses and apparel, and none spoke to other, but ever they looked one way, and some were of a mild countenance, and others looked grimly as if they loathed that journey; yet none might turn back nor leave the troop. Then I could see a young man that rode beside them, and he wore a plain close hood upon his head, and no manner of arms nor ornaments, nor so much as a staff in his hand. But his face was as the face of a captain, and wheresoever he signed with his hand, there they must needs all go. So they passed on and left me alone. Then I was ware how the moor sloped downward, and in the narrow valley there ran a full dark water in flood. And there was a bridge made all of gray steel, and no path thereon, but it came to an edge as keen as was ever any Damascus blade that I saw in Spain; and I knew that I must cross that bridge or be lost in the flood. For so it was in that land that none might never turn back whence he had come. And as I stood sore amazed, lightly there came running along the edge a ball of golden thread spinning itself out, and ran up into my hand as it were a live thing. So I took the thread, and therewith I walked boldly on the edge, and in the midst of the bridge I looked down, and there in the flood was a barge made fast by enchantment, and a loathly fiend therein which had the sompnour's head, and with a great staff beat down folk that strove to lift their heads out of the water. And on the other side there sat an angel in glory spinning the thread, but when I came nigh to her I saw well that it was Jenifer Datcher; and straightway all vanished, and I went again a long journeying over good and bad ground, enduring divers perils. And

ever I knew that my soul had made all that world of mine own deeds, and none other might come near me for good or ill.

"At last I came to a place where there was a great and deep mire, greater than Aune Head Mire on Dartmoor; and it was a darkling light so that I could not see where the sound way went through. Then I was ware of little shining creatures that went crawling and hopping before me, and by their shining I followed on the good path; and I knew not what they might be. But one of them spoke and said, 'Sir, ye mind well how ever ye taught your children to despise none of God's creatures, nor to call none of them foul or ugly; and now we be toads and efts which they saved alive according to your will and teaching, and therefore have we not failed you in this adventure whereas none other help of man or beast might avail you.'"

"Oh, father," interrupted Ermen-gard, who was barely old enough to follow the thread of the tale, "we have got the two biggest and wisest of all the toads; and you must come and see them the first thing in the morning; and they are so wise that we call them Archbishop Morton and Bishop Fox."

"And who then shall be arch-deacon?" asked Sir Guy.

"That is soon told, sir," said Walter. "We have taken the greediest and most ill-favoured of the last little pigs to be archdeacon."

Then Sir Guy continued:—

"When I was past that mire it was clear day, and I came to a green meadow where was a pavilion, and thereby stood a knight all armed, a young man of a passing fair countenance. His armour was of blue steel, and of the finest work that ever might be made by any armourer of Milan, and he was apparelled at all points for justing; and he had a shield with no blazon nor other device upon it, save only a pair of golden balances. Then said this knight to me, 'Fair knight,

ye are welcome here, and now shall ye prove yourself upon me, for the custom of this passage is such that no knight may pass here but if he just with me.' 'Sir,' said I, 'ye see well that I am a man forspent and unarmed, and methinketh it were small worship for you to have ado with me.' 'As for that,' said he, 'look if ye be not better apparelled than ye think.' Right so I looked round me, and there I saw mine own armour, and my good horse, and two goodly spears. Then I thanked him of his courtesy, 'And now,' I said, 'I will well dress me for to just with you; but first I will require you to tell me your name, and what manner of knight ye be.' 'Sir,' said he, 'I may not now tell you my name, but ye may call me the Knight of the Balances; and know that I am a knight that serve the lord of all this country, and of such conditions that it should be no disworship to just with me for any knight or prince that is upon the earth.' 'Ye say well,' said I, and so I armed myself, and was right glad to feel my arms and my horse under me, and so I departed to gain my distance. But before I could make ready my spear, suddenly there rose up out of the earth between me and that knight as it were a wall of clear fire, hotter than any furnace, that it flamed up to the sky on either hand as far as ever I could see. Then came a voice that said, 'Ride now through this fire, or be for ever shamed and unworthy of knighthood.' And I looked on either hand again, and there were other knights not a few that were dressed to ride likewise, and some of them were Saracens. And I heard them say through all the noise of the fire, 'Ride with a good courage, for we are all here of your fellowship.' So I commended me to God, and in great amazement rode straight where the fire burnt, and I was in a marvellous great light, that all my armour glowed therein, but I passed out as whole as ever I was; and I looked back, and where the fire had been was a garden of the fairest roses and lilies.

Then said one of these knights, 'Wit ye well, Sir Guy, that we be your adversaries whom in your life days ye have fought knightly and courteously withal, and for that cause have we come to do you service in this adventure.' And with that they were all vanished, and there was only that young Knight of the Balances with me. 'Well,' said he, 'ye are well sped with this last adventure, and now I dare say that we two shall just without fear of enchantment or other hindrance.' So we departed and aventered our spears, and ran together with all the speed we might; and I brake my spear fairly on that knight, but for all he was young to look upon and of no great bigness, he justed so mightily that he bore me to the earth. Then I avoided my horse, and drew my sword to fight with him on foot. But he would not suffer me, and came to me with his sword sheathed, saying, 'Ye shall have no more ado with me to-day, for ye have done as much as a good knight ought; and, Sir Guy, if I had not well known you I should never have bidden you to just with me. Likewise ye shall understand that I may not with my custom fight on foot with you, for I have drawn this sword but once in all time that the world was made, and shall draw it but once again in a day that I know not of.' Then forthwith I was ware that this knight was Michael the archangel, and I had great awe of him, and worshipped him. But he took me by the hand and made me good cheer, and bade me ride with him as knights used to ride in company: 'For,' said he, 'I shall bring you to my fellowship in the King's court. And my custom is to just in this manner with all good knights that have achieved the former adventures.'

"Then as we rode I asked of Saint Michael, 'Sir, I would know, if that I may, whether the like adventures befall bishops and churchmen and other clerkly men as well as knights. For methinketh it should not be convenient if bishops and abbots and other holy

men, which are not nor ought not to be men of their hands, should be enforced to just with you.' 'As for bishops and abbots,' said Michael, 'it may be that great plenty of them come to our court here, and it may be we have not such plenty that there must be a rule for them; but I shall tell you that for men of all conditions there be appointed fitting adventures, and a clerk shall be proved in clerkly things as ye were in knightly things. And when a great clerk is come to this passage, my brother Gabriel doth his office, and that is such that he and some of his fellowship come forth and require that clerk to dispute with them. And many times there be notable arguments holden, as at the coming of your countryman William of Occam. But of all clerkly men that have achieved this quest the greatest and most worshipful cheer was made for Dante of Florence, as ye may well guess by the vision that in his lifetime he saw.' 'Sir Michael,' said I, 'do kings and princes just even as other knights and so ride with you, or have ye other customs for them?' 'Yea,' said he, 'there be pageants and solemnities for just princes, after every one hath fulfilled his adventures as a man ought, for each after his worth; as for your English kings Alfred and Edward, and Frederick the Emperor of the Romans whom your clerks call *stupor mundi*.' 'Truly I have heard tell,' said I, 'that this Frederick was a great and a wise prince, but also they tell that he died excommunicate and in danger of Holy Church.' 'Well,' said Sir Michael, 'be that as it may, if we judged here with popes' judgment we should lose from our court many noble knights and princes, and wise clerks, and holy men and women of great charity, and that were overmuch pity. Yet for other causes that prince had shrewd adventures before he might win to the passage. And anon ye shall see stranger things, for I will bring you where the Soldan Saladin, whom ye call an infidel, is companion to Trajan of Rome and Rhipheus of

Troy in the eye of the eagle which is in the sphere of Jupiter.'

"Now we were come to the gate of a goodly city, and outside the gate was music and men and women dancing joyfully, and betwixt every two there danced a blessed angel, and made them all the cheer he might. And their wings were not like the wings of any bird, but of such colours as no earthly craftsman might make with glass work and stones of price, not if he were the master of all those of Venice. Then I marvelled whether these goodly sights were given in like measure to all who might win to that Holy City, or should be divers according to every one's conditions, for that the sight of an angel or of a saint may well be greater than a simple knight's wisdom may compass or his strength may endure. 'Sir Guy,' said Michael (although I had not spoken), 'of that ye have good reason to marvel, albeit I may not fully show you the truth thereof at this time. But wit ye well that according to our degrees we see after other manners than men in your mortal life see, and that is upon earth as well as here. For I could bring you in houses of religion where ye should see a plain brother in a bare cell, it may be writing in a book, and it may be painting on the wall, and in our sight he is a saint in passing great glory, and a host of angels ministering to him. And many times where ye see men oppressed of princes and great lords, and forjudged of treason and heresy, and finding no place to rest, there in the sight of the blessed these be princes of great estate, and the oppressors mean and foul to behold. And now,' said he, 'must I depart from you, for ye be full young in the things ye ought to learn, and my brother Raphael, who led the child Tobias, shall lead you into the city.' Then I perceived at the entering of the gate another angel unarmed, and he was of the most loving countenance and the most full of peace and charity to all people that ever might be seen or thought. And he took me by the

hand, and I saw no more shape or countenance of him, but only a great light, as if the heaven were covered in every part with stars as clear as the sun, the which light was made of the angels and archangels and blessed souls; and as their lights moved and shone, meseemed I understood in them without any word spoken more mysteries than ever all the clerks of Oxford and Paris could set forth in their books if they should all write for seven years. Moreover there was sung *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth*, with such quiring and such instruments of music as I deemed not mortal ears could have heard. With that I knew I was not yet worthy to achieve that glorious quest to the uttermost, and so I awoke into this present world. But the music of the *Sanctus* seemed still in mine ears, and peradventure, if it shall so please God, in time to come some man that is worthy shall hear it more perfectly, and have such cunning of music that he may set it down, and such device of instruments that he may let play it withal."

IV.

"FATHER," said Hugh, "do you think Saint Michael will really just with us in heaven if we are good knights?"

"If you live as long as I hope you will, my sons," answered Sir Guy, "perhaps you may rather have to shoot with him in a hand-gun."

"What!" protested Walter, "the blessed Michael touch a thing that burns foul stinking powder, and slays a knight unawares like a knave! If it were honest shooting at butts, now, I am sure even an archangel might shoot a good round without any disworship. And then, under your favour, Sir Luke, I think for execution in the field I would choose a stout archer who can loose me half-a-dozen arrows while your gunner is fumbling with his tackle to make ready for one shot."

"You shall hear to-morrow," said

Sir Guy, "how Francisco Ramirez persuaded us otherwise at the siege of Malaga."

"Yes," added Sir Luke, "I love a good armour and a good sword as well as any man; but our fathers' armour is already old-fashioned, and who knows what the next generation will think of ours? I talked once in Milan with a singular good craftsman, a man of such skill in many masteries as God sends once in hundreds of years; his name is Leonardo, a painter, a worker in metals, I know not what else. His thoughts have run much on martial devices, and he told me his judgment that our sons will live, if we do not, to see these same hand-guns change the face of war. For bows and arrows may never be any stronger or better than they are, but guns will be bettered in every generation, and ways will be found to make them shoot quicker and straighter as well as stronger, and soon there will be no armour man can bear that will withstand their shot. And so our fine armourers' work, in which we excel all former ages, is like to be found a vain thing even when it has been brought to perfection."

"Well, Sir Luke, I will pray that Saint Michael, if he does take to new weapons, may still keep his tilting-armour by him, and a spear or two to break with old-fashioned folk."

"But may it not be, Sir Luke," said Hugh, "that if we give up heavy armour there will be all the more room for good sword-play?"

"Well thought on, my son," answered Sir Guy, "the guns are there, and we must take them for better or worse; but you may yet see the discomfiture of armour bring about the triumph of the sword."

The talk was interrupted by the appearance of Cottle and Pengelly bringing up the body of the sadly crestfallen sompnour. He began a voluble and rambling speech in which protestation and servility were hopelessly mixed.

"Good fellow," said Sir Guy, "there

is no need. I shall only desire you to give your company apart for a short space to this knight, my friend and guest. He is a stranger, and curious to know more of the admirable procedure of our Court Christian in England."

A short quarter of an hour had passed when the sompnour rushed back into the hall pale and breathless, and threw himself at Sir Guy's feet.

"As you are a Christian knight, sir!—for that I never gainsaid—in the way of grace and charity, and I will ever pray for you, bid this man undo his charms. He hath laid spells upon me; I am a man undone; they are in a tongue of Mahound and all the devils; Latin will never bite on it. You will not see a poor servant of the Church wither before your eyes! A counter-charm, there is nothing for it but a counter-charm! St. Nectan and St. Just forgive me if there be any sin; I perish else. At your mercy in any fair way of temporal reprisals, good Sir Guy, but not those fearful words."

The host signed consent to Sir Luke, who had followed more leisurely, and who now planted himself before the sompnour. Fixing his eyes on the sompnour's, and passing his hands over the sompnour's head with a kind of reversing motion, Sir Luke spoke thus in a solemn voice: "*Rafel—allez—mai—avec votre archidiacre—amech—au tresgrand—zabi—diable—almi—sans jour. In onomate Nembroth et Nabuchodonosor liberamus istum hominem desicut herebi machara non pertransibit eum.*"

The sompnour recovered his self-possession in a moment. "Sir Guy," said he in his natural or rather usual manner, "for your courtesy in this matter much thanks; protesting nevertheless, as a humble apparitor and servant of the Church, and reserving to my superiors all competent jurisdiction over the divers assaults, contempts, and other enormities this day committed against authority both spiritual and temporal. And I would

warn you in all friendship, as a poor man may, that this strange knight puts you in danger of being noted for keeping company with one that is little better than an infidel."

An explosion of laughter was the reward of this official virtue.

"As for infidels," said Sir Luke, "you may tell your masters that Sir Guy and I have slain and captured more of them in these three years than any archdeacon in England has seen or is like to see dead or alive."

"You may tell them also," said Sir Guy, "that I bear special letters from King Ferdinand to our good lord King Henry, and if either bishop or archdeacon have a grievance against my guest or me, they may find us at the King's court within the octave of St. Matthias if they will. And now my people will give you some supper; but I answer for nothing if you let yourself be seen here again."

Next morning Sir Luke had a long talk with Jenifer Datcher. Afterwards, as he was showing the boys some Moorish feats of horsemanship, Hugh suddenly turned upon him: "Sir Luke, will you tell me a thing?"

"Surely," he answered, "if I know it and it be lawful for me to tell."

"Then was it really very dreadful language that you astounded the sumpnour with?"

"He was partly right," said Sir Luke; "it was indeed the tongue of Mahound; nothing worse than good Arabic."

And that was perfectly true. But it is certain that Jenifer had not time to learn Arabic from Sir Luke, and that her cures in the village were thenceforth more remarkable than ever.

FREDERICK POLLOCK.

NATIONAL PENSIONS.

THE cause of National Pensions has long been advocated by avowed Socialists, who look for the realisation of an ideal not unlike that of Plato's Republic. But it is only within the past year that the matter has attracted the attention of politicians and has entered upon the phase of practical discussion.

The arguments for a scheme of National Pensions are very simple. We have merely to look around us in order to see persons of apparent respectability who have been left in old age without any means of subsistence. There is no certain provision for them except the workhouse or a few shillings a week doled out by the parish. The Poor-Law system, we are told, causes unnecessary suffering and is out of keeping with the humanity of the present age; it is therefore the duty of the State to provide some other machinery for the protection of the poor from destitution.

To this contention the upholders of the present Poor-Law reply as follows. The promise of support in old age necessarily removes the most powerful incentive to work and to thrift. Our social system is based on the assumption that all should rely for their maintenance upon their own efforts. But we revolt from condemning any one to starvation. The Poor-Law is a concession to humanity, but must not be allowed to interfere with those influences on whose operation the welfare of the community at large depends. It offers food and shelter and clothing to the destitute; but the conditions of relief laid down by the Law must be strictly adhered to, and the life of dependence upon public charity must never be made as attractive as that which the lowest independent labourer can provide for himself.

Experience has shown that this condition can be properly preserved only by offering relief in the workhouse.

The advocates of the new departure admit the general truth of their opponents' contention; but they say that the Poor-Law has come to be in fact not merely the asylum of those who have failed in life through their own fault, but also the only home to which the industrious poor can look forward with certainty if they live to old age. These, they say, have a positive claim to some better provision.

The case has been put most forcibly by Mr. Chamberlain, and, as it seems to me that two radical fallacies underlie his position, it becomes necessary to consider it somewhat in detail. He asserts that "one in two of the labouring class, if he reaches the age of sixty, is almost certain to come *for his subsistence* to the Poor-Law." I wish first to call attention to the words which I have italicised. Mr. Chamberlain's figures are ultimately based upon returns of old-age pauperism, obtained about a year ago by Mr. Burt. This document shows the number of persons (exclusive of vagrants, lunatics, and certain other paupers), professedly over sixty years of age, who were, on August 1st, 1890, in receipt of relief from the Poor-Law in England and Wales. But Mr. Burt's return makes no allowance for those in receipt of mere medical relief. Now, medical relief is an item by which the number of paupers is enormously swelled. In 1890 the average number of paupers in London was 106,000; in the same year the number of medical orders issued was 119,000. A return of paupers which includes those who have received nothing except some trifling medical relief, which

they would have obtained elsewhere if the parish office had not been handy, is not very instructive. The receipt of a bottle of medicine can scarcely be held to prove that the recipient needs a pension, and Mr. Burt's return does not prove that a single individual has come upon the Poor-Law for his subsistence.

The second objection which I take to Mr. Chamberlain's statement is of much more vital importance. He assumes that because at the present time a certain percentage of the labouring classes may be in receipt of parish relief, the same proportion of paupers to the population will necessarily hold good in the future. To assert this is to deny that the diminution in ordinary pauperism which has taken place in the past will continue, and to deny the possibility of improved administration. In those Unions where the administration has been most strict and consistent the decrease has been most marked and most rapid.¹ No one can doubt the truth of this who has studied the history of such Unions as those of Brixworth and of Bradfield in Berkshire. The experience of Bradfield is so material to our question that I venture to quote a few figures relating to that Union. The district is mainly agricultural, and the rate of wages which rules there is low. No great industrial change has taken place there in recent times, and the only exceptional advantage which it has enjoyed has been the presence of certain gentlemen who for twenty years have devoted their time to a careful administration of the Poor-Law. In 1871 the number of persons receiving relief was 1,258; in 1888 it was 192. This

diminution took place in the number of in-door as well as out-door paupers, their numbers falling from 259 to 150. We may add that during the same period the poor-rate fell from 2s. 0½d. in the pound to 5¾d. The reduction of out-relief has been effected gradually, the old recipients being allowed to retain it; and there is therefore reason to hope that in another generation the pauperism will be very much reduced. In 1871 one person in 13 in Bradfield was a pauper; in 1888 it was one in 126. Yet any person visiting Bradfield in 1871 and observing the number of paupers then to be found in the Union would, if he adopted Mr. Chamberlain's method of reasoning, have expected to find in 1888 one person in 13 a pauper. And if on the strength of this inference he had tampered with the administration of the Poor-Law his anticipation would possibly have been justified by the result.

The lesson of the Bradfield Union is repeated wherever the Poor-Law has been carefully administered. In towns, of course, the conditions of life are more complex than in rural Unions, and the task of relating causes and effects to each other is more difficult; but if carefully read the history of such Unions as Whitechapel and St. George's-in-the-East confirms the soundness of the policy pursued at Bradfield.

The new school of reformers have a ready reply to the figures which I have quoted. They do not deny that a strict administration of the Poor-Law results in a reduction of official pauperism, but they assert that the apparent reduction is accompanied by a real increase of distress. The poor hate the workhouse, they say, and prefer starvation to life within its walls, and the refusal of out-relief necessarily leads to great distress. Here I join issue with them. The evidence at our command is clear. Once more the Bradfield Union supplies us with the information which we want. Throughout the whole period of strict administra-

¹ By strict administration is meant the refusal of out-door relief to applicants (not already in receipt of it) except in special cases, and for very limited periods. The main objects of this policy are (1) To render the prospect of parish relief unattractive; (2) To prevent applications from those who are not really destitute. Experience has proved the impossibility, at any rate in towns, of ascertaining an applicant's real sources of income.

tion, side by side with a diminution in the number of paupers there has been a constant improvement in the condition of the independent labourer. This is not merely the statement of such gentlemen as Mr. Bland Garland, who speaks from a long personal experience, but whose judgment might be supposed to be biassed in favour of a policy which he has always strongly advocated. The assertion is borne out by the observation of a large majority of the clergy in the district. If we accept their evidence, and to my mind it is unimpeachable, the labouring classes in the district are generally better housed, better clothed, and more self-respecting than they were when out-relief was given lavishly. They have not starved by its withdrawal. So far from this—to take a definite test of well-being—the membership of sick-clubs has within the period increased 152 per cent., and that of Friendly Societies 148 per cent.

The Poor-Law is sometimes made the subject of attack on the part of well-meaning persons, like the coroner for East London, on the ground that its existence does not prevent the occurrence of cases of actual starvation. It is the unhappy truth that such cases are met with here and there; but the fact which chiefly impresses the student of the annual returns of cases in which a coroner's jury have found a verdict of "Death from Starvation," is that their number is so small in proportion to the population. It is, indeed, because they are so few that each instance attracts, and rightly attracts, so much notice. They would occur under any system. The Poor-Law offers shelter to every destitute person; but we cannot prevent individuals from refusing even in the last resort the conditions under which the relief is necessarily given, any more than we can prevent suicide on the part of those who refuse to accept the conditions of existence under which their lot is cast. Those who perish from want and exposure gene-

rally prove to have been recipients of irregular legal and charitable relief, which has tempted them to refuse until too late the shelter of the workhouse. An impartial consideration of the history of the Poor-Law is bound to lead to the conclusion that on the whole it fairly performs the function which it was intended to fulfil,—the relief of destitution. If it does not offer the pauper an attractive prospect, it was never intended to do so. That the poor should have the means of spending their last years in comfort is as much the desire of such men as Mr. Bland Garland as of the most advanced Socialist; but it is not to State-support that they should look for the means of doing so.

In spite of the evidence to which we have referred there are many who refuse to believe that it is possible for the poorest class, even by the exercise of the sternest thrift, to provide for a prolonged old age, or at any rate to do so except at the sacrifice of all recreation and of everything that makes life worth living. It is useless, we are told, to appeal to the experience of the past. Our forefathers subsisted without pensions, but their maintenance in old age was too often not such as we should now deem satisfactory. Moreover the general standard of living is much higher now than at any previous period, and we cannot expect, nor do we think it desirable, that the working man should, during his years of work, live as his ancestors lived. The report of the Belgian Labour Commission leaves no room for doubt that in Belgium and Holland labourers and artisans of every class live on a much lower scale than those of our own country. They eat less meat, drink less alcohol, live in more crowded rooms, and spend less on dress and recreation. But to live as the foreigner lives would be intolerable to an Englishman, and we cannot expect him to do so. The question we have to answer is this: Can he by reasonable effort and self-denial, without making his working life unbearable, save enough in any

form to make provision for his old age?

The experience of Friendly Societies in the matter of insurance against old age does not at first sight appear encouraging. Wherever they have not been misled by the prospect of help in sickness from the parish or from medical charities, the working-men have formed themselves into Friendly Societies, and have shown that they can with tolerable certainty, provide against distress caused by sickness. In 1890 the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows comprised 673,073 members, and the Ancient Order of Foresters, 623,505. The total of sick-allowance paid by the two Societies in that year amounted to 14,000,000 days, while in 1889 the Hearts of Oak paid 1,300,000 days. Some of the old Trades-Unions have been able to pension members after a certain age, but we do not find that the Friendly Societies are able to deal satisfactorily with the poverty of old age. With the best Friendly Societies sick-pay ceases as a rule at the age of sixty-five; and though some have ventured to start a pension-branch, it has not generally proved very successful. The experiment was tried by the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, but, after two years four members only had become subscribers to the fund.

Must we from this evidence infer the inability of the poor to insure against old age? A knowledge of their habits and prejudices will, I think, enable us to answer this question in the negative. The deferred annuity is the form of insurance which is least popular among the poor. In the first place, they do not care to invest their money in the purchase of an allowance which they may never live to enjoy; in the second, it is a thoroughly selfish system, and does not directly benefit their families. This dislike of deferred annuities is easily demonstrated. The Post Office offers facilities for the purchase of deferred annuities on equitable terms and with absolute security.

Though these facilities are open to all, and no question can therefore arise of the existence of persons able to insure, in the year 1888 the premium revenue of the Post Office for Life Assurance amounted only to £14,121, and the number of contracts opened in that year was only 580. We are told that the Post Office arrangements are so complicated that they deter the public from availing itself of the benefits offered, but at any rate they do not deter depositors from making very large use of the Savings Bank Department. Again Industrial Assurance Companies offer no facilities to their customers for the purchase of deferred annuities, as they certainly would were there any demand for them.

The ways in which the poor invest their savings are manifold. Often they purchase articles which they can realize in time of want, having enjoyed the use of them meanwhile. If they have enough furniture, they can take a small house and let off one or two furnished rooms; in this way they may sometimes clear the whole of their rent. Working-men earning good wages often become members of building societies, and thus acquire the absolute ownership of the house in which they live. Through the same agencies they have the opportunity of investing small sums at good interest on mortgage. The capital of the registered Building Societies of England and Wales amounted last year to upwards of fifty millions. But of all forms of providence known among the poor, none is more popular than the insurance against death. There is scarcely a village in the country in which the agent of "The Prudential" is unknown. The sum insured in the Industrial Branches of fourteen Insurance Companies on policies for sums not exceeding £50, amounted in 1887 to £83,649,570, the total number of policies being 9,177,661. The work is mainly carried on through the agency of collectors, and the average cost of management

amounted in consequence to 44·38 per cent. of the premium revenue. Though we may deplore the costliness of the system, we must not forget that but for the importunity of the collector the majority of these policies would never have been taken out at all, and much of the money now paid in premiums would have been spent at the public-house. The greater part of the life policies taken out in the Industrial Insurance Companies are, it must be confessed, for very small amounts, such as would seem able to secure no benefit beyond providing a handsome funeral for the deceased and handsome mourning for his immediate relatives. But even insurance of this kind serves a useful purpose. The majority of the poor who live to old age become more or less dependent upon relatives. An aged relative is a more welcome guest for the possession of a life policy, even though it be but for a small sum, and this will often procure his admission to the home of those upon whom he has no legal claim. It will sometimes be found that the policy is taken out in the name of the nephew or niece with whom he goes to reside.

If we cannot safely infer from the apathy of the leading Friendly Societies in the matter of old-age benefits the inability of members to support a pension fund, there are instances which prove that such an inference would be not only unsafe but untrue. To quote once more from a county to whose experience I am already heavily indebted: the Berkshire Friendly Society makes it incumbent upon all members to subscribe either for sick-pay calculated for their whole lives, or for an old-age pension. Though the members are to a great extent agricultural labourers earning low wages, the Society has constantly grown, and is now in a flourishing condition. It is true that some management expenses are saved by the voluntary assistance given by local gentry and farmers, but this can scarcely be held to vitiate the claim that the Society is practically self-sup-

porting. If its success has been due in great part to the good advice which has been available for it, it can hardly be condemned on that account. Indeed, this is just the way in which those who enjoy the advantages of education and leisure can best help the poor. Whether the efforts of those who wish to establish pension funds in connection with all Friendly Societies could with advantage be supplemented by State-assistance is a question which it would be idle to discuss until the leading Societies ask for such assistance. They have hitherto shown little inclination in this direction.

In the preceding pages I have dwelt on the old-age problem as it stands at present. I have endeavoured to show on the one hand, that the attacks which have been made upon the Poor-Law are founded upon misconceptions, and, on the other, that the prospects of the working-man who looks forward to old age are less hopeless than have sometimes been represented. I am now in a position to advert to certain proposals for National Pensions which have been submitted to the public. Of the suggested schemes the most simple and most radical may be taken first.

The provision, at the expense of the State, of a pension of five shillings a week for all persons over sixty-five years of age has been boldly discussed by Mr. Charles Booth, who was recently described by Mr. Chamberlain as the greatest living authority on pauperism; though he has, I believe, no practical experience of Poor-Law administration. It is evident that Mr. Booth is favourably inclined towards the scheme; and he seems to regard it as impracticable at present only because the taxpayer of England and Wales is not yet likely to be willing to pay the £17,000,000 a year (or eightpence in the pound Income Tax) which would be required. He argues that the bulk of the aged poor would be able to live in fair comfort with this allowance as a nucleus, supplemented by their other resources. The

workhouse would still exist for those very helpless or very reckless persons who could not find a home outside, and their pensions would be drawn by the guardians.

Mr. Booth has, in our opinion, seriously underrated the difficulties and dangers which would attend the carrying out of this scheme. No careful estimate of the real cost has been attempted. The £17,000,000 does not cover management expenses, and these would be enormous. The Poor-Law guardians, for all their decentralised machinery, cannot protect themselves against imposture, and the authorities entrusted with the administration of the scheme would find it in practice no easy task to guard against applicants understating their ages, and to prevent the families of deceased pensioners from continuing to draw their allowances. It would be impossible to foretell what economic difficulties would not arise in the working of the experiment. Take one example. Many men at sixty-five are still able to work. Now, the experience of the old Poor-Law has shown conclusively that the effect of an allowance in aid of wages results in their reduction. Whenever out-relief is given we find that persons in regular receipt of it are willing, because they are able, to secure employment by working at less than a subsistence wage. Complaints have even been made in certain quarters that army-pensioners obtain employment in preference to other labourers because they are in a position to take lower wages. May we not naturally fear that under the proposed system pensioners would undersell their labour, and drive out of employment their juniors of the age of, say, sixty to sixty-five? This lowering of the age of superannuation should logically be followed by a reduction of the pension age to sixty—it is estimated that this would double the cost—and the process would repeat itself indefinitely. The main argument used for making the pensions payable to all, rich as well as poor, is that by this means the

idea of disgrace could be banished from the receipt of public assistance. Is not the price a rather heavy one to pay for the privilege of seeing the poor pocket an allowance paid for by others with as much complacency as they receive their own wages?

Where, however, Mr. Booth seems to me most mistaken is in the view which he takes of the probable effect of the measure upon thrift generally. Will, he asks, the assurance of five shillings a week after sixty-five make those who can lay by at all less anxious, on the whole, to do so? This question has been answered in the negative by the Fabian Society, and Mr. Booth adopts their arguments. At present, we are told, the poor cannot save enough to provide a satisfactory maintenance in old age. They must have recourse to the Poor-Law in any case, and their savings would only go in relief of the rates; therefore they make no attempt to save at all. If, however, bare subsistence in old age were assured them, the certainty of reaping the benefit of their savings would stimulate to providence. No figures can help us to test the force of this contention. We must, each of us for ourselves, form an opinion in the light of our knowledge of human nature. As we have seen above, the workhouse is not, even for the poorest, the certainty which the Fabian Society contends. Thrift does for the most part secure its due reward, and the poor have at present the strongest possible incentive for saving. What are the motives which practically determine conduct? One need not be an Utilitarian to see that there is a constant struggle between the desire of present comfort or pleasure on the one hand, and the fear of want or discomfort in the future on the other. Even under the present conditions too many of the poor find the desire of present gratification irresistible. Is the motive likely to prove less powerful when the force set against it is no longer the fear of the workhouse, but the possibility of having to do without

additional comforts after sixty-five? What attraction will deferred luxury have for the drunkard and the idler? In France, where the peasant has not so certain an asylum as the workhouse to look forward to, he is led by the fear of destitution to habits of thrift unknown in this country.

There is another aspect of the question. Even in our present civilisation the unit is not the individual but the family. Within the circle of the family we are for the most part Socialists. The father works for the good of all, and the mother's motives are not individualistic; even brothers and sisters do not always insist on their legal rights among themselves. We are all dependent upon our parents in childhood. The majority of us—for the poor are a majority—if we live long enough, become wholly or partially dependent upon our children, or other members of our family, in our later years. Does not this fact afford the real explanation of many of the difficulties which puzzle the statistician?—Numbers of the poor are apparently unable to save against old age. Yet official returns show that they die neither in the workhouse nor from starvation. The simple truth is that old people are supported by their children or other relatives. In such assistance there is no degradation. The benefits are received in return for similar kindnesses bestowed by the recipients in former years, and are given in unconscious anticipation of similar benefits to be received in their turn by the donors. One of the most potent forms of thrift on the part of parents is the education of children in such a way that they will, in years to come, recognise their filial obligations. Is not this a better Socialism than that which, while it assumes altruism on the part of every member of a community, would loosen parental ties and foster within the family a selfish individualism? This consideration has special force with regard to the position of women. They are naturally more dependent than men upon their

families, and they would be most affected by any measure which undermined the recognition of family obligations.

Of the many proposals which are in the air for the supplementation by the State of voluntary insurance, the most definite is that of the National Providence League. Its essential provision is that every person who has secured from his own payments a pension of two shillings and sixpence a week shall have the right to claim from the State an additional weekly allowance of two shillings and sixpence at the age of sixty-five. He is also to be allowed to receive any Poor-Law relief which may be necessary at any preceding period in the form of out-relief. This proposal would doubtless be a far less dangerous experiment than that which we have already discussed. Some of the objections to the latter would, however, apply to it, though in a less degree. And we must not flatter ourselves that the measure would do much towards the abolition of pauperism. The case of the drunkard and of the spendthrift would be left untouched, and though in a matter of this kind accurate statistics are not to be obtained, we may note that careful persons like Mr. McDougall, of Manchester, who have investigated the sources of pauperism, attribute 51 per cent. of its numbers to drunkenness alone.

In view of these considerations and of the great burden which the proposed experiment would impose on the unfortunate ratepayers, I cannot think that we should be well advised to adopt a scheme which would in effect offer an enormous premium to one particular form of thrift, and that one which, as we have seen, is the least acceptable to the taste and feelings of the community, and which would risk injuring by unfair competition the development of those natural agencies which already possess the confidence of the working-classes.

—The proposal of the Poor Law Reform Association to combine the pro-

vision of the free pension with supplementation from public funds, to the extent of 20 per cent. of any deferred annuity not exceeding £10 a year provided by insurance, seems to me to unite the defects of the two schemes which we have discussed.

If State-aided insurance must fail in inducing the improvident to take thought for their old age, the idea naturally occurs: Why not make insurance compulsory? This course has been advocated for years by Canon Blackley. The reply to the suggestion is simple. We are not at present sufficiently advanced in Socialism to submit to such compulsion. The experiment is being tried in Germany, where workmen are forced to find about one-third of the cost of insuring for themselves a small superannuation allowance. There even, if we are not misinformed, it is only in the case of men in constant and regular employment that the collection of premiums is at all satisfactory. With us the difficulty would be greater still. The casual labourer, the man in irregular employment—the class from which the aged pauper is chiefly drawn—is just the person who would escape payment, and be left in the end without a pension. Moreover, the cry would soon be raised that it is a cruel thing to exact insurance money from a man who scarcely earns enough to keep his family in the bare necessities of life. We should witness a repetition of the process which has been observed in the history of elementary education. Just as State-assistance was followed by compulsion, and compulsory attendance at school led to free education, so compulsory insurance would very possibly result in free pensions. The arguments which brought about the abolition of school-fees would be applied with equal force to the new question, and our democracy would be easily convinced that if the poor were compelled to pay for benefits which they might never live to enjoy, the State was bound, in common justice, to provide the premiums.

If none of the pension-schemes which have been proposed can safely be adopted, are we to be content with a policy of sitting still? If we cannot by a stroke of the pen, or by an enactment of the legislature, emancipate the poor, can the rich do nothing to assist them to work out their own salvation? Let me indicate a few directions which it seems to me that the efforts of those who seek to promote the welfare of the poor might take. The process of depauperisation which is going on in Unions like Brixworth and Bradfield can become general throughout the country only by the constant efforts of disinterested and intelligent guardians, and no man need consider the work of Poor-Law administration unworthy of his devotion. The promotion of Friendly and Co-operative Societies is another task calling for the assistance of men of education and leisure. In rural districts especially a sound Friendly Society can hardly be floated and steered into success without wider knowledge than the labourer possesses. Again, it would be impossible to enumerate all the various ways in which the poor can be instructed in the means of effecting household economy and avoiding waste. Further, a preacher who would convince them that unduly early marriage is a crime, and that parents who bring into the world more children than they can properly maintain, have none to blame but themselves, would be one of the greatest benefactors of the age.

Again, while we must never sacrifice the interests of the community to those of the pauper, it is possible, even under the present system, to do much towards making his lot tolerable. In recent years much improvement has been effected in workhouses, but in many parts of the country much still remains to be done. The changes which seem to me to be most desirable are in the direction of better classification and of providing suitable occupation. Elaborate classification no doubt entails much expense, but

money can scarcely be better spent than in insuring that comparatively respectable people are not compelled to associate with the depraved. Want of employment, again, is probably the cause of much of the dreariness which strikes the visitor in the workhouse. Why should not old people be encouraged to occupy their time in work as nearly as possible like that to which they have been accustomed? Any reform of this kind makes life in the workhouse happier without making it in any way more attractive in anticipation.

Hitherto I have made no mention of private charity. Its bearing upon the question under discussion is, however, too important to be left unmentioned. Thrift and industry do as a rule meet with their reward. There are, however, cases in which owing to exceptional misfortunes the most provident and the most energetic are finally left destitute. It is the duty of private charity to deal with these. The cases are not so numerous as might be supposed, and private charity, if properly organised and not wasted on the wrong objects, is for the most part competent for the task; though, from time to time, sensational appeals on behalf of striking schemes divert the stream of contributions, and the poor suffer in consequence. It is true that such charities as the Tower Hamlets Pension Committee, which was founded to provide adequate pensions for the class of case indicated in certain districts of London where out-relief is practically abolished, have great difficulty in obtaining the support they deserve; but the best managed committees of the Charity Organisation Society, who have on principle fixed the standard of eligibility very high, claim that they have never failed to procure from some source the means of supplying a pension in any case resident within their respective districts, which it has

seemed to them desirable to recommend to the charity of strangers.¹

There are, no doubt, many districts in which the local sources of charity stand in need of much organisation before they can be regarded as competent to furnish a pension to every suitable applicant. But no public machinery would possess the necessary discrimination or elasticity for dealing with the intricacies of delicate case-work, and it is to voluntary effort rather than to legislation that we should look for the solution of the problem.

The principles which underlie my main contention are not new. They were learnt in the early part of this century, at the cost of bitter experience, by the classes who then ruled the country. Most educated men have been able to profit by the lessons which their fathers have been able to teach them, and the history of the Poor-Law is open to all who care to read it. Now, however, we are governed by a democracy, and democracies prefer to-night's evening paper to ancient history. It may be that the masses will have to learn by personal experience the truths which, if they were wise, they might accept at second-hand. Unfortunately there will always be leaders ready to encourage them in their unwisdom. The potential pauper does not like the workhouse, and his vote cannot be despised. In the exigencies of party strife there is no danger into which politicians will not be found to rush; but the thoughtful man who is not seeking popularity will prefer to be "on the side of the angels."

¹ The Charity Organisation Society has thought right, as a rule, to appeal to strangers for help to provide pensions only in cases where these two conditions are satisfied: (1) That the applicant has made the best use of his opportunities for provision against old age; (2) That the relatives, if any, upon whom the applicant has a legal or strong moral claim for support are doing their best to help.

H. CLARENCE BOURNE.